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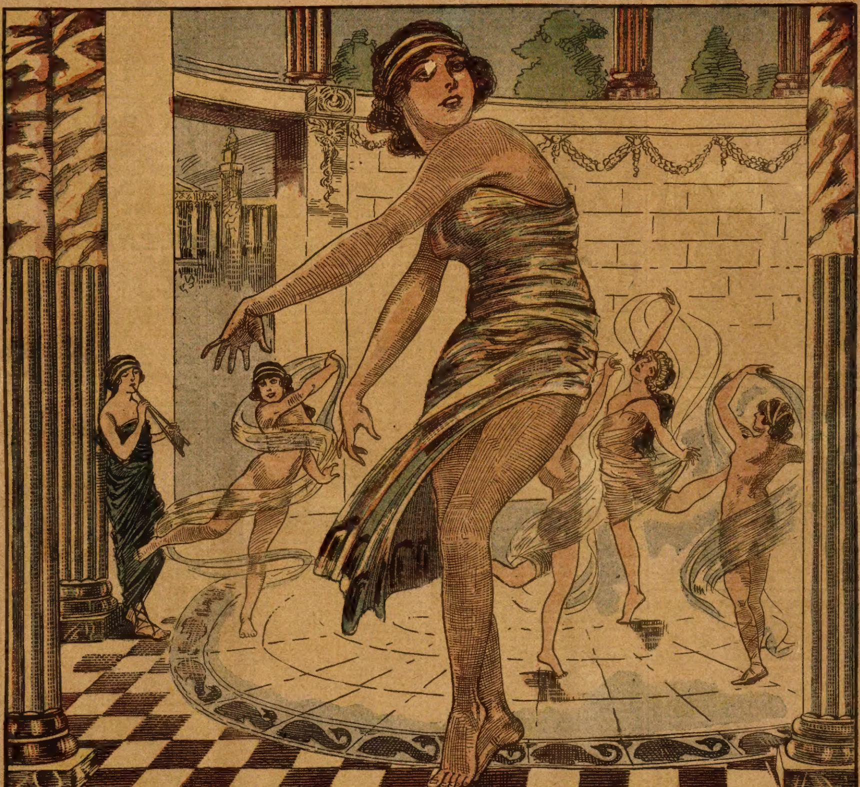
ILLUSTRATED STORIES

VOL. LII. CHICAGO, ILL., SATURDAY, AUGUST 16, 1924. NO. 33.



IN THIS ISSUE

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by ARTHUR TALMAGE ABERNETHY

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WEEKLY LEDGER
ILLUSTRATED STORIES

[Copyright, 1924, by W. D. Boyce Co.]
VOL. LII. AUGUST 16, 1924. NO. 33.

Entered as second-class matter May 23, 1924, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under act of March 3, 1879.

Published Every Saturday
W. D. BOYCE CO., CHICAGO, ILL.
500-514 North Dearborn Street.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

Single subscriptions to the Chicago Ledger by mail $2.00 a year (52 issues), $1.00 for six months, three months 50 cents, in advance. Remittances should be made by Bank Draft, Registered Letter, Postoffice or Express Money Order, payable to the Chicago Ledger. The address tab on your paper shows the date to which your subscription is paid.

Single copies, 5 cents.

ADVERTISING RATES.

For Display, $3.00 each Agate Line; for Classified, 35 cents a word, per insertion for circulation of the Chicago Ledger and The Saturday Blade combined.

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The Falling of a Leaf

By Hapsburg Liebe

HE HAD always been an arrant coward, and he was intensely human under the surface, and his blue eyes were uncommonly fine; otherwise he seemed a fair type of the average tramp. No piece of his ragged clothing fitted him; his shoes were not mates; he wore a yard of hempen cord for a belt; he wore his battered black felt hat wrong side out to make the rim stay up. His unkempt hair and beard were of the brown chestnut burrs. He didn't remember a father or a mother; if he had ever been named he had forgotten it—when it became necessary for him to have a name he used Breamer because he thought it sounded good. As a child he had been cuffed about by older people in cavernlike alleys; as a boy and a man he had been a wanderer. Always he traveled alone, shunning the society of other tramps; and he carried a tiny bag of asafoetida suspended from his neck to keep away illness.

When the spring was turning into summer, he began to move northward; Florida's sun had become much too warm for him, and there were mosquitoes. It was in a little town that nestled among the foothills of Tennessee's mountains that he made bold to call at the home of an old-fashioned minister-doctor for the purpose of finding out whether there was anything serious connected with his cough, shortness of breath, fever in the afternoons and sweating at nights. The minister-doctor was plain. He advised the tramp that he could live four months by going high into the big hills and staying there—provided he could get a daily diet of milk and eggs; he also solemnly advised him to make peace with the hereafter.

Breamer thanked the practitioner and set his worried face toward the piled up, dim-blue mountains that formed the Eastern horizon. He was a coward, and he wanted every day of life he could get. The hereafter was a thing he hadn't thought of much; and now he was forced to think of it he was afraid. There was something terrible, something not to be understood, something black and mysterious about it. He realized his littleness and his utter unimportance as he had never realized it before.

"Me goin'," he said to himself, "matters no more'n a leaf fallin' to the ground."

He wanted to go to the highest mountain, for that meant more days of life to him. The mountain folk directed him to Clingman's Peak, an elevation that afforded a view of five counties.

At mid-afternoon of a fine day in late July he reached the summit and looked down into the lake below. His uncouth and uneducated spirit leaped within him at the magnificence of the view. He tried to throw out his chest, and his fine blue eyes sparkled. There was something like holiness up here above the world and its madness, above everything.

"D—n!" said Breamer.

"What?" came a voice from the scrubby laurel behind him.

The tramp turned slowly. He saw a well-dressed youth of 18, whose intelligent face bore lines of sadness and loneliness.

"I dunno," muttered Breamer.

"I think I understand," smiled the youth. His voice had a musical Southern accent that was very engaging. "All this below. I felt it, too, when I first came up here. I'm not calloused to it, you understand, but—but I have other things to think about. I'm mighty lonesome, you know. I've been up here four weeks——"

"For your health, same as me!" Breamer interrupted. "I've got four months; how long 've you got?" He tapped his chest significantly.

The other's eyes widened. "I—I don't know," he answered. "I've got a little hut out on the crest of the mountain a hundred yards, and I've got plenty of things to eat. I go down and buy food from the mountain people about every ten days; if you're hungry, I'll give you something to eat. Are you? You look it."

"Got any eggs and milk?" asked Breamer. "The doctor said I must eat eggs and milk. How the devil am I to get eggs and milk! I'm a d—d tramp, y' know. I was so bad scared I never thought o' how I was goin' to eat; I just started for the hills, a lettin' the future take care of itself, as I've always done."

"I've got eggs."

"Please lead the way, Bo. Excuse me for callin' you 'Bo.' I'm used to callin' anybody that. It's a road name." Breamer smiled a little. The two of them, so widely different—as different as the East is from the West, went to the hut. The Southerner apologized for the poorness of his temporary home, and the tramp said it was all right. Breamer ate for the first time that day.

Charley Abbott felt a great sympathy for this derelict the stream of life had thrown at his feet. He gave Breamer his hut, and built for himself a low shelter of hemlock boughs; he gave Breamer a blanket and a few articles of clothing, and he furnished Breamer food. In spite of the high, dry air, the tramp continued to fail rapidly in health. He began to ask about the other life. Abbott, deeply touched, told Breamer all he knew to tell; then the derelict began to square himself with the hereafter—the black and mysterious hereafter. It was heart-breaking, it was pitiful. His going mattered so little to anybody except himself; it mattered no more than the falling of a leaf.

Why had he lived? He had not asked to come into the world; he had not asked for the responsibility of keeping the immortal spark in the house of clay. He felt rebellious for a while; then he listened to Charley Abbott's gentle persuasion and resigned himself with a certain vague hopefulness. To him Abbott was a god; he worshipped Abbott; no other person, in all his life, had even been a friend to him.

ONE afternoon in August Breamer missed his youthful friend. He searched over the crest of the great peak, and failed to find the boy. Breamer walked with a cane now; he limped down the western side of the mountain, during the sunset hour, and found Abbott sitting on a stone, with his head bent to his hands. He went closer and saw lying beside the youth the photograph of a very lovely middle-aged woman, and she was smiling.

Breamer picked up the photograph and looked at it with his fine, hollow blue

(Continued on Page 17.)

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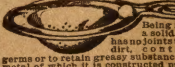

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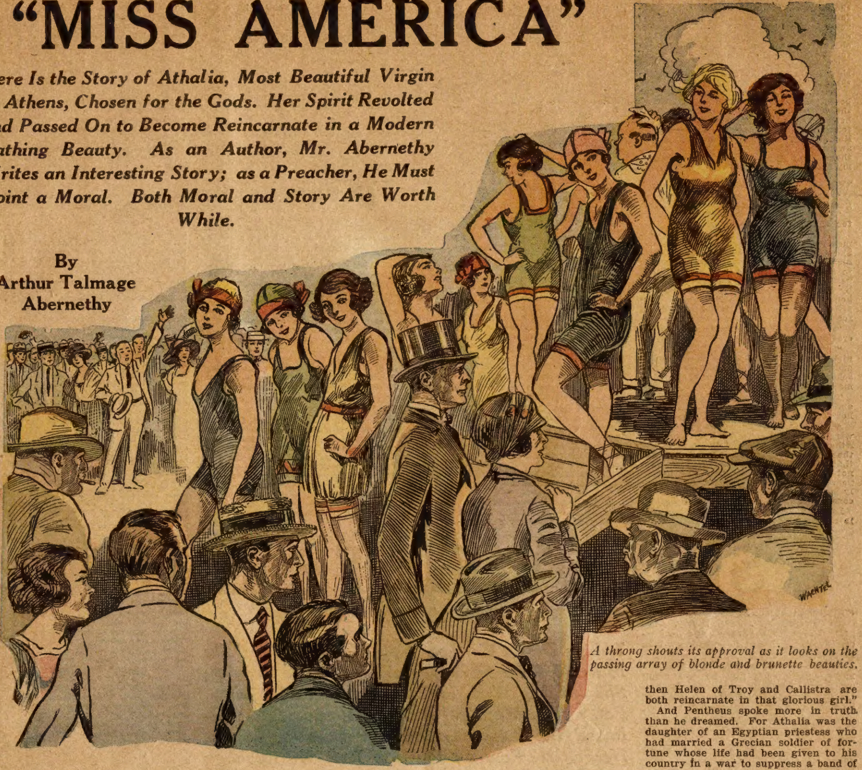
By
Arthur Talmage Abernethy



A throng shouts its approval as it looks on the passing array of blonde and brunette beauties.

IT WAS in the succession of the Olympiads, corresponding to the year 420 before that more golden era of the Christ.

Athens was beginning to stir with unwonted life as the newly risen sun was silvering the Parthenon crowning the acropolis, for it was the time of the great festival to Aphrodite Pandemos. Pentheus, Creon and Haemon, three choice young men of wealth and culture, sat at a table in the palatial home of Pentheus. They had sat there thru the night, and the half empty bottles of wine accounted for the flush on their faces, while the shifting pile of drachme in front of them spoke of the fickleness of the dice.

Creon yawned wearily:

"Pentheus and Haemon, friends of my heart, do you know what day has dawned? It is the one day of the year when passion comes to flower. You know that we three, scions of the oldest families in Athens, have been signally honored by being selected by the priests of Aphrodite as judges of beauty. Overmuch wine and want of sleep may dull our fine sense of discrimination. Pentheus, mine honored host, what say you?"

"Why," said Pentheus, "your judgment, as always, is unquestionable. We will to the bath, then breakfast—then beauty."

Haemon heartily agreed.

The sun-dial spoke the hour of 9, when the three splendid young arbiters strolled out, arm in arm, and were drawn into the sweep of the vast procession along the beautiful colonnade. On either side, unnoticed by the throng, towered the temples of Minerva, Neptune, Ceres, Jupiter, Apollo, Mercury, Bacchus, and the host of statues from the chisel of Praxiteles. On by the porches of Plato and Pythagoras the surging mass swept toward the temple of Venus. Human nature was the same in that far-gone day as now, and countless thousands of all grades, from Athenian Senators to their servants, were surrounding the spacious, open court of the goddess of love and lust. The ranks of maiden beauty had been ransacked, and a thousand girls of unrivaled Grecian grace and beauty were to dance, in the nude, before the judges and the assembled multitude. The three young men were assigned to their seats of honor, the tide of humanity pressed on them, the herald gave the signal, and the ceremonies began.

First were the sacrifices to Hercules, then to Aphrodite. Then came the youthful Patrocles, more beautiful than any other son of Sparta, drawn in his chariot of ivory and bronze and gold. Thrice drove he around the amphitheater, the incomparable and undisputed champion of all Greece. As he leaped from his chariot, at a signal from the king, and scaled the royal box to receive the insignia of the monarch's pleasure, Patrocles struck his expanded chest with proud disdain of the vanquished sons of Athens, and, swinging his sinewy arms, he sprang into his chariot of ivory and bronze and gold. Thrice he drove around the track, lashing his foaming steeds into a mad race, the curious, envious throng scarcely escaping his chariot wheels as he swept madly past them. In the midmost section of the vast pavilion Patrocles caught sight of Athalia, the follower of Pythagoras, already late for her place in the national festival of the nude dancers. He checked his chariot beside her and called lustily:

"Hail, fair Pulcherissima of Athenian virgins, come ride with me. For I am Patrocles, champion of the champions, at wrestling or quoits the master of any man in Greece. On the morrow I select my bride from the victorious in the Athenian festivals. Thrice happy and favored that daughter of Greece who shall thus ride with Patrocles around the royal concourse."

Athalia eyed the braggard with mingled admiration and contempt.

"I walk alone today, my Herculian boaster. On the morrow I plight my troth with Proterculos, son of Prodicus. For I make my choice of a lover not by his sinews but from my heart. Be gone!" And Athalia hastened on to join the revelers.

Then the sensuous dance began.

With that inimitable grace of Athens, the beautiful maidens threw themselves into the maddening mazes, their bare feet caressing the soft sward of the amphitheater, revealing in rhythmic movement the dazzling splendor of their faultless forms. The hungry eyes of the spectators devoured the scene. The dark eyes of the dancers shone; their dark, soft, silken tresses streamed in the light breeze sweeping down from Mount Pentilicus; their voluptuous bosoms rose and fell, swelled and subsided, as the dance grew wilder.

Above this bank of beauty one maiden towered supreme. It was Athalia, the follower of Pythagoras. Phidias, the wizard of the chisel, had lived and died too soon—he had never looked upon such perfection. The multitude stared in raptured amazement, and many shouted:

"Venus has come to her own temple!"

It seemed beyond question that she should be selected queen of the festival, and then her matchless beauty, her symmetry of form and features, would become the property of the high priest of the goddess.

"By Zeus!" said Pentheus to his friends. "If there be any truth in Pythagoras' doctrine of transmigration, then Helen of Troy and Callistra are both reincarnate in that glorious girl."

And Pentheus spoke more in truth than he dreamed. For Athalia was the daughter of an Egyptian priestess who had married a Grecian soldier of fortune whose life had been given to his country in a war to suppress a band of rebellious Idumean slaves. The languorous, luxuriant loveliness of the queen of the Nile was hers by heredity no less than the unmatched grace of her Athenian beauty.

There was something more than beauty in her sweet face. There was a shade of shamed modesty. That inborn, inherent chastity which is the property of all women of all centuries and climes, lowered her luxuriant lashes and tinged her heaving breast.

The swift and unanimous vote of the populace, giving her the crown, was greeted by a shout of applause that shook the temple.

But the king would not have the emotions settle the dispute of the contestants. He ordered the judges to accompany him, beckoning also to the high priest and two senators, the oldest in the service of the state.

"We have a standard," the king said; "bring forth the measurements of Aphrodite."

And taking a strip of papyrus and a reed of bronze, the king first paused before Athalia, trying the tape to her hips, then to the breadth of her breast, the circumference of her thighs, prying open her mouth to discover if there were imperfections there. Passing the papyrus and reed of bronze to the senators and the high priest, each followed the actions of the king, the aged high priest pressing the abashed young maiden to his bosom, as she shuddered at his sensuous touch. The noble young scions of Athens did the same, but out of reverence for the goddess Aphrodite, whose image stood before them, they refrained from the measurements, and nodded their approval to the king. The other contestants slunk away. The king, bidding the vast assembly be silent, proclaimed thru the speaking trumpet that Athalia, the follower of Pythagoras, was queen of beauty and the child of the goddess Aphrodite. Before the blushing maiden could make her retreat to her dressing booth, Patrocles, dazzling in his splendor, checked his chariot of ivory and bronze and gold before her, and bade her step in.

"It is the King's command that you ride thrice with me around the amphitheater," he said.

Burning with shame and modesty, the beautiful girl had ridden twice around the circle when she spied with eyes that heightened her surpassing grace, Proterculos standing near the front of the line, his vision blazing with pride as she swept past him. She reached far out of the chariot and whispered, "Tomorrow, my love!" and was gone.

WHEN the crowd had slowly dispersed, the priest came forward and rapped gently on Athalia's dressing-booth door.

"Athalia," he said, "you are the daughter of the gods. Come with me."

The haunting vision of the utter abasement of her exaltation dawned upon her. She thought of Proterculos, son of Prodicus, waiting at that moment to see her in safety to her home; of the inviting nest they had already planned together, by the river's bend; of the happiness of home and children and honor. The priest must have divined her sentiments for he said:

"It is the will of the gods and the decree of the King."

"But grant me one requst," begged the girl. "Let me bid farewell to my people and the priest of my religion in the school of Pythagoras. Tomorrow, if it may be, I will come to you."

The high priest nodded his agreement, and the fair maiden went toward her home under the spreading olive trees.

At that time, as is well known, there were many adherents of Pythagoras in Athens. He taught that the soul is but the temporary tenant of the body, and that when the body dies the soul does not wander unfleshed thru the empty years, but passes into some other newly born body, and that it retains the consciousness of its former incarnation.

Late that night, Athalia found her way to the priest Pythagoras.

"Father," she cried, "mine were the first of the human race to erect altars and set up temples to the gods. They were the first to lift their crushed spirits to the gods in prayer for succor. I have but one prayer: grant me that when I pass from this body, I may some day be reincarnate in a land where such shameless orgies as today's are never practiced; where I may live modestly and unashamed."

"My daughter," answered the priest of Pythagoras, "your prayer has been heard, and will be answered."

Athalia pressed the priest's bony fingers to her lips, and went out to her home. There she lifted the historic sword of her illustrious Grecian sire from its scabbard and fervently kissed it. Then she took from its place of honor in her boudoir the golden goblet wraught only that day by Proterculos, in token of her victory, around the base of which, in his beautiful chirography, he had carved the ancient motto of Isis, Queen of the Egyptian goddesses. Athalia read it again:

"To thee, who being one, art all things."

She picked up her father's sword. Rising wearily, as one who has been stricken by the deadly asp of the Nile, Athalia gazed for a long time on the face of the moon, emblem of Isis, goddess of the Nile. To her, too, she prayed.

She turned the paternal sword in her perfect fingers. Carved on the hilt she read the message which had been her father's inspiration in every battle:

"Dedicated to the protection of womanhood and country."

The girl smiled resolutely. Then she sent the untarnished blade to its hilt thru her aching heart. The next morning when the priest came to claim her he found Athalia, still more beautiful in the calm composure of a great conquest, dead before the small statue of Aphrodite. The favored daughter of the gods had gone to join them.

IT IS the year of our Lord 1923, and in Atlantic City, in the United States of America. From every great metropolis of this Christian empire have come the fairest flowers of virgin maidenhood, selected with the most discriminating choice by the sage editors of the daily press, to engage in a national festival by the rolling sea. The governors and the editors and the artists are there. For many months the chambers of commerce have vied with the press and the people to send from each proud city the maiden whose flawless figure of physical perfection and grace of senuous beauty will bring to the city of her birth the coveted title of "Miss America," queen of the fair maidens of the land. A throng, so densely populous that it is with difficulty that the richly decorated rolling-chairs make their way over the wide boardwalk, shouts its approval as it looks on the passing array of blonde and brunette beauties, bowing and blushing and bending as it moves along. In the thick of the throng the great procession halts. The judges, this time the editors and artists, staid and sober fathers and husbands at home, with the sang froid of horse-jockeys testing race-track thorobreds, lay the tapes to the limbs and ankles of other men's daughters, sprawling on their knees as they peep thru the flimsy gauze that ill conceals the physical perfections of young women sacred to themselves, their mothers and their future husbands. They press the contestants' heaving breasts, lay the tape to their rounded thighs, their comely necks, their spreading hips; and then, as if with one sudden inspiration of accord, they lift the shapely arm of a virgin toward the sky and proclaim with the self-assurance of artists:

"This is 'Miss America,' the country's queen of beauty." *

That night, after enforced feasts in which her modest maiden-heart bled, "Miss America"—Athalia the follower of Pythagoras once, but now the reincarnate in the beloved schoolgirl from the state of bishops and American presidents—conscious of the irony of her reincarnation, lifted her tear-moistened eyes to the true God for whom she had sought in pagan darkness ages before, praying to the insulted and injured Christ:

"Oh, thou omnipotent One who came to rescue womanhood from her low degradation in Asiatic paganism; who didst decorate virtue with thy presence at the Cana marriage feast, and set a watch of love in honor of her who bore thee, in thy last word to thy beloved disciple from the Cross, 'Mother;' give me to know thy love in this hour when I come to realize that humanity is the same in every age and creed and clime. When the transmigration of the womanly spirit is merely a renewed lease on physical indignities, help thy people, who have not yet reached their spiritual adolescence.

"Grant me this one prayer, thou Christ: that in this new civilization men may come to realize that they have already committed adultery in their hearts who look upon a woman, save in kindness, who see in thy handmaidens only physical charms and sensuous perfections. Oh, spotless Lover of the mothers of men, thou Climax of all the virtues and all purity, help me in this new trial of my faith, a faith that was old before thou hadst first come among men in the flesh. As I struggled then in my pagan trust to be pure and true, keep me now that I am no longer the simple maiden untested by flatteries and untempted by a fickle world's applause.

"My Father, as I lost in my pagan coronation the tender trust in the hope of the limited circle of a true husband's love, and became the plaything of a nation and the possession of a priest, even now I must yield, for I am no longer the owner of myself. From every newspaper page, from the multi-colored magazines, from the moving-picture films and the billboards, from charts that discuss my features and dissect my charms, my features glare at me, the advertised and analyzed public property of the nation.

"Grant me to find a sustaining hand out of thy heaven, for Christian America is not better than pagan Greece."

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* Note by the author: This actually happened. The Associated Press reports stated that the judges crawled on their knees to peep under the contestants' costumes to study their ankles and limbs, while pious mothers and undisturbed fathers stood silently looking on, fondly trusting that their supine surrender would win the prize for their own daughter.

SIBLEY GETS EVEN.

BY EMMA UPTON VAUGHN

Things Didn't Go Too Well When Patty Belle Married Jake Sibley, and When Lige Brayton Showed Up With an Automobile and Money, Patty Belle Made a Terrible Mistake. Jake Followed the Runaways With Vengeance in His Heart. He Found Them and Took His Revenge—Tho It Wasn't Just the Sort He Had Planned.

THE night that Patty Belle Wiley became Mrs. Jake Sibley, Lige Brayton disappeared, and for several years northwest Georgia knew him no more.

At first speculation was busy with his name. Some said that he had made away with himself; some that he had gone to Atlanta to tend bar; some that he had joined the regular army. But all agreed with the postmaster at the Cross Roads as to the cause of his flight.

"Reckon Lige plumb couldn't stand hangin' erround hyar, an' seein' Patty Belle living with Jake," the postmaster opined.

It was generally held that Patty Belle had done well for herself. Jake had a lease on a "one mule farm," so called because its approximate extent of thirty acres could be worked by a man and a mule. His log cabin boasted two rooms, and the wide hall between them had a rude porch over its front door. Lige had been only a farm hand on Judge Rawling's place.

But if Lige's disappearance had stirred the neighborhood, his return after an absence of three years, interested the countryside still more deeply, unused as it was to outside breaths.

A large part of rural Georgia is of the Baptist faith, and one fine Sunday afternoon the whole population adjacent to Cross Roads had assembled to witness a baptizing in the creek, the aftermath of a week's protracted meeting.

They came in all sorts of rigs. The nearer neighbors used Shank's horses over the roads, deep with red dust. Many came in mule carts, and a few drove, slow, ambling oxen. There were some delapidated surreys, and one or two old-fashioned phaetons.

The crowd was breathlessly watching the good pastor as he prepared to immerse a particularly heavy convert when the toot of an auto horn sounded from the road, and the minister came near dropping his convert into the water as a fairly good car stopped close to the edge of the crowd. The only occupant of the car was a well dressed man who waved a greeting hand.

"Well, I'm blamed!" exclaimed the postmaster, "if it ain't Lige Brayton, come back in style!"

Most of the crowd shamelessly deserted the creek bank to crowd around the car. Foremost among them was Patty Belle. Her erstwhile lover reached down a welcoming hand.

"Howdy, Patty Belle," he said, "you-all well?"

"You-all" is never used by your true Southerner when the meaning is really singular, and Patty Belle sensed that Jake was included in the inquiry.

"We-all tol'ble spry, thanky," she answered. "They ain't no need to ask how you air!"

Whittling a stick Jake Sibley strolled up to his wife's side.

"Hello, Lige," he greeted. "Must a been makin' right smart of money to come back in an ottermobile! Reckon next time it'll be a flyin' machine!"

"Mought be so, Jake," responded Brayton indifferently. He was looking at Patty Belle.

The baptismal service was soon concluded, and the assembly broke up into little groups and sauntered toward their respective vehicles, exchanging neighborhood gossip as they went.

"Reckon you-all walked down, Jake, bein's you don't live fur off?" queried Lige, his eyes still on Patty Belle.

"Yep," cut in Mrs. Sibley. "Jake 'lowed the righteous man is merciful to his beast, so we-all give the mule a rest wunst a week."

"Let the critter keep on a-restin'. My mule don't need no rest! Hop in, an' I'll give you a spin!" and Brayton hospitably flung open the door.

Probably there were not half a dozen people in the crowd who had ever been in an auto, so it was natural that Patty Belle should feel elated as she stepped into the machine, taking the back seat. Jake followed and sat down by her. Lige closed the door with a bang, and they started off in a swirl of dust.

"RECKON I'd better go down to Cross Roads with them shoats today, Patty Belle," Jake Sibley said as they sat at breakfast one morning six weeks later. "Want to go erlong?"

If Sibley had been an observing man he would have noticed the overdone carelessness of his wife's reply.

"Why, no, I reckon not today," she said. "But I wisht you would bring me them cotton bats I tole you erbout." There was something furtive in the sidelong look she gave her husband.

"Bet Lige will be erlong this morning to take me 'joy ridin' ', as he calls it," she thought. There had been many such rides of which Jake knew nothing.

After breakfast she helped Sibley load the young pigs into the mule cart, then stood in the doorway and watched him drive away. There had been no good-by kiss.

"Huh! He don't keer fer me any more'n that ol' mule does!" she thought bitterly.

If Lige Brayton had been the deepest student of psychology he could not have chosen a better time for his return. The reaction that frequently sets in after two or three years of marriage had begun with the Sibleys. In another year they might have safely passed this crisis, as most couples do. Jake still loved his wife, but Patty Belle was left to guess at it, and she guessed wrong.

She had been a pretty girl, but hard work and the fading of romance from her life had sharpened her features, and made her careless of her dress; but since Lige had come back her face had rounded into something of its old rosiness, and her dress had improved.

She turned and went into the house, but instead of setting to work washing the breakfast dishes she walked to an improvised wardrobe and took from a peg a new calico dress. Its pink coloring set off her dark eyes and the brown hair she arranged becomingly. She was applying some corn starch to her face in lieu of powder when Lige appeared at the door.

"Hello, Lige," she called in poorly simulated surprise, "what fetches you here-abouts so early?"

"You!" tersely answered the man, striding over the floor until he was close to her. "You don't need that stuff, Patty Belle," touching her cheek with fingers soft from some months of idleness. "Roses and lilies don' need no paint!"

"You hesh up, Lige," she fended. "Talkin' to an ol' married woman that-away!"

For answer he caught her arms above the elbows and swung her facing him.

"Patty Belle," he whispered hoarsely, "do you remember that night under the ol' bam tree, with all that light green, sweet smellin' stuff fallin' on us? You breshed it off'n my sleeve, an' yore fingers set me afire! That was afore Jake came atween us. I tole you I loved you then. Well, I did. An', Patty Belle, I ain't never got over it!"

"Don't, Lige," she pleaded. "It's plumb too late to talk that-away!"

"No, 'tain't, neither! Jake didn't appreciate you, Patty Belle. Come with me. I love you better'n he ever did! Come with me tonight. We can get away in the car slick as a whistle!"

"No, no! 'Twouldn't be right, Lige! The thought of it would haunt me. Why, I'm a church member in good standin'!"

"Yes, 'tis right! 'Tain't like we was strangers. It's plumb different! You belonged to me first, darlin', an' I'm only taking back what is my own! You could get a divorce an' we could get married."

"But I'm afeard, Lige." Patty Belle's heart was melting before that "darling." "I'm afeard of Jake. He'd foller us an' kill you, or mebbe both of us!"

"Hut! I see him follerin' us! Why, he's never been outen this county. The ol' mule would as soon think uv chasin' us! I got a right smart uv money, Patty Belle, besides the car. I kin take good care of you, an' you shore are goin' with me!"

His arms tightened around her, and he crushed her to him. Their lips met in a clinging kiss.

That night Lige Brayton disappeared again. And this time Patty Belle vanished, too.

WHEN Jake Sibley awoke the next morning and found no Patty Belle about the house he decided that she had gone out to the barn to feed the chickens. But as time passed and she did not come in he grew uneasy. What if that pesky mule had kicked her? The two never had been good friends.

He hurried out to the rude barn, but no trace of his wife was there. He looked in the hen house, and even in the pig pen, with the same result.

A thought came to him and he ran to the house and jerked aside the chintz curtain before the homemade wardrobe. Patty Belle's hat and coat were gone!

Further search revealed that all the better part of her simple clothing was missing. The old-fashioned valise was gone, too. He stood in the bedroom a few seconds, dazed; and then the truth burst on him. He raised his hands in impotent fury.

"I'll foller them to the jumpin' off place, and send them to h—l together!" he cried, and sealed the vow with a terrible oath.

Eager as he was, it took nearly a week to make the start. Having almost no ready money he decided to have a

(Continued on Page 13.)

Did You Ever Eat Two Pieces of Cold Mince Pie and Drink Two Cups of Black Coffee Before Going to Bed? If Ever You Did, and You Want to Be Reminded of What Happened to You That Night, Read This Story. You'll Appreciate Just How Our Hero Felt When He Jumped Into the Boat and Went Thru the Botton Into the Water.

THE PHANTOM MILL

BY HENRY ALDEN BURKE

LOVELY, charming, amiable mother! Shattering destruction of her hopes must have caused her keen disappointment. Even now, perhaps it would be better if I went back to wheeling coal. You see it was like this. Generally, I'm patient; but—darn it, nobody likes being shaken up. For no other reason than that dad had for years got away with it, mother intimidated the neighbors by a monstrous threat that I was destined to become a medical man—in well-nigh every other respect I am considered quite normal and compliant to accepted standards of saneness. I had often hankered—God forgive me—for one or the other to fall sick and that I might be permitted to do the prescribing. I felt sure that in such circumstances I would forthwith be apprenticed to the village smith.

I was born in Skeetesville; but—for the life of me I can't see how that should be held against me—my convenience was not consulted. Anyway, it didn't take—my being born there—and as for becoming a physician; nay, nay! My metier was writing and I never seriously considered deviating from that fixed purpose.

Well, to abbreviate a short story, I bombarded the sacrosanct sanctums of fiction editors with my drivel, and, time and again, was given grave and serious assurance that my style of delineation was the Manx cat's tail and was bound to meet with acceptance—elsewhere. I fell for what he said; for, never in all my life had I known a fiction editor who was other than the very soul of credibility and veracity. Of course, there were times when I wished that these sincere souls might be more definite and to the point, for I'm morally certain that my stamp investments were responsible for a discernible profit in the postal department of a provident government.

But let that go as it lays, for just about that time some facetiously inclined individual—I've since ascertained that it was a guy by the name of Hohenzollern—chopped away the limb back of me while I was absorbed in garnering the harvest. And, believe me, what that guy Hohenzollern's friends did to sincerely yours totaled a-plenty. Some one, somehow, discovered that I was possessed of a smattering of medical lore and I was wished into a field hospital as an assistant.

Pardonnez-moi! I was very nearly overlooking the detail that the space allotted me is limited—it behooves me to get to the meat—so, if not precisely brief, I'll make it snappy as I can. Like other heroic figures of that hectic period, I was shelled, shrapnelled and gassed, and the story I am artfully scheming to inflict upon innocuous innocence transpired when, I was by-by under the influence of an anesthetic.

Allons! I use this word for no other reason than that it was one of the few I acquired in Flanders and because it is the fad of the present to flaunt one's French—and, really, I do want to seem to be in gear with the times. Atmosphere makes up a large proportion of one's life.

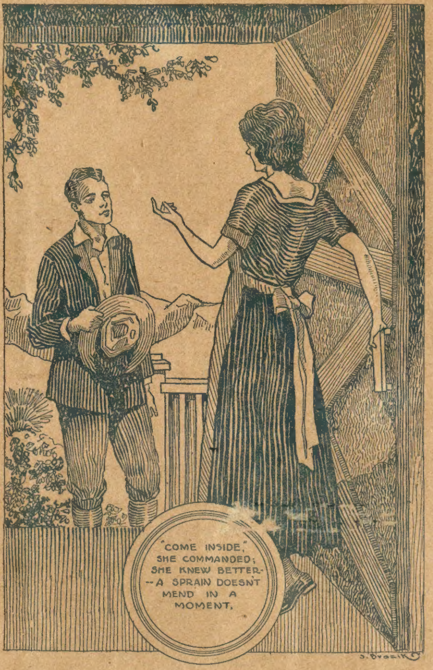
"Luke, efya love me, jist let me soak him one d—n good crack with this pick-handle!"

"Naw!" Luke's voice quavered on the verge of tears.

"Aw, Luke," I protested, "On'y oncet; come on! 'Twon't hurt 'im much; 'n on his d—n ol' tough hide 'twon't show a-tall."

"Naw, I tol'ja!" Luke's voice held suppressed anger. "Lafayette's a kerlossal fraud; but all'a same heeza d—n good mewl fer th' shape heezin."

Suffering mackerel! Ten miles to go and at the mercy of a balking mule. Besides, the road had vanished. Where it had been, nothing remained but macerated grass stems, the imprint of shod hoofs here and there, and the furrows left by iron-tired cart wheels. Beyond loomed a somewhat more difficult and perplexing ascent for some hundred rods thru mire-holes and pastures, then plunging into a gloomy wood the way lay unyieldingly to loftier places, deviating in zigzag fashion where rocky excrescences protruded and rivulets of spring water rendered the course boggy.



"COME INSIDE," SHE COMMANDED; SHE KNEW BETTER—A SPRAIN DOESN'T MEND IN A MOMENT.

"They's a station over yander," gesturing with the whip he had spared the mule. "Ef yer in sicha big hurry, mosey over 'n take th' nex' train. They mought be one erlong enny minnit now."

Well—of all the lamenting old weevils, commend me to Luke Tracey. Gee, how that bird could cry! A dozen times had I witnessed him shed pearls of sympathy for that dog-goned case-hardened lazy mule. Argument wouldn't avail; I grabbed my bag and jumped to the ground.

"This is persecution, Luke Tracey, 'n you know it," I expostulated bitterly, but to no purpose. "It's a frame-up, 'n I can prove it!"

"You'll hav'ta; s'long," he gulped his Adam's apple. "Perposin' t' do bodily harm to a inoffensive ol' mewl ez faithful ez Lafayette's bin." His line of argument was real helpful and inspired me not a little.

"Why, ya big blubberin' gorilla," I said. "Aw righ' fer you, Luke Tracey—you yaller pup! Yeah, you got me th' first time—I said yaller! You ain't got th' red blood ova toad. You haven't th' guts t' hold up a 2-year-old 'n take away his cookie. Gwan, ya——"

"G'by, Mister Hatch; railroad's over yander," he rumbled. "Better git a wiggle on—might miss th' nex' train." I took him seriously and—moseyed.

A SCANT half mile to the north, beyond a brook that for ten miles followed the contour of a valley compressed between these foothills, lay a railroad—a narrow-gauge line—connecting with a regular railroad five miles further along. A train of the latter—granting I was so fortunate as to make it—would land me at a point some miles beyond my destination, Panther Hollow, but I could tramp back that short stretch. Besides, I was in a good deal of a hurry and any motive power was preferable to a balky mule driven by an obtuse jackass too obstinate to permit one persuading a stubborn critter with a pick-handle.

Tho it is not generally known, that vicinity is one of many engineering marvels, not the least of which is that little narrow-gauge Mistyville and Mountainview Railroad—direct airline to Panther Hollow and all points back of beyond or thereabout. Should it transpire that a train were late—a chronic ailment, by the way—said train was held at the wayside until such time as the time-table might be revised by the train crew.

Tugging at my heavy bag I plodded onward and upward. Despite the mountain chill of a September morn, beads of perspiration oozed from my marble brow. At a moss-covered flat rock I paused to recuperate. I threw myself on the stone prone on my back, shuddering, straining and gasping for breath, deeply inhaling the ozone until my fluttering heart ceased its pounding.

The landscape was cluttered by a growth of immature sapplings—chiefly birch and hardwood—only here and there was evidenced a young spruce or pine. That region, I suspected, must have been lumbered a century since; probably to keep the Phantom Mill going. Recovering a second breath I arose and gazed backward toward where I had come from. Luke was still arguing with Lafayette. I was appalled at the distance. "Criminny cripes—a hundred miles," I told myself, then for the sake of accuracy amending the distance to "well—fifty at least." As a matter of fact the distance was a trifle short of half a mile.

I emitted a groan, picked up my bag and proceeded. In the little shelter-house at the side of the railroad I came upon a fellow-traveler likewise awaiting a train's arrival. A husky young giant with uncreased trousers tucked into the tops of rusty boots, a fellow who had not recently availed himself of the services of a barber. I nodded a greeting.

"Live 'round here some'eres, mebbe?" I ventured a guess.

"Nope," he replied, "waitin' fer th' train. Goin' downta Hopper Falls."

"Express, ain't she?" I queried. "In some'at uva a hurry myself."

"Naw; 'commodation. 'Spress don't run till Sattidy." He eyed me curiously. "Wher'ya bound fer?"

"Panther Hollow," I explained. "Hav'ta change at Seaton Junction. Know anything 'bout that country?"

"Uhuh; a leetle. Tha's where Job Todd built the Phanton Mill. 'Spose y' know Ol' Job died?"

"Uhuh; I'm administrator of the estate. Left a daughter, didn't he?"

"Yep; 'n b'leeve me, mister, she's some gel is Job Todd's daughter Marthy."

At this critical juncture a miniature engine puffed and snorted up to the station dragging behind two superannuated coaches. We scrambel aboard and to the accompaniment of an amazing din and clatter the little train was again set in motion.

Tho the train was pretty well patronized by rough looking lumber jacks and hill billies, I was fortunate enough to secure a seat next a window where a view of the fleeting landscape was excellent, my friend of the station dropping into the vacant space at my side. The time was only mid-September, yet frost had already come to this altitude. Birches were yellow as virgin gold against the somber green of pine, spruce and hemlock; oaks and maples lent a softer hue. Beyond the vista was obstructed by an untrammeled profusion of alders.

At the junction we changed to a real honest-to-goodness railroad again lucky in securing seats at a window. The train started, gathering speed as it emerged from the wood and skirted a declivity, twining in and out circumventing rocky headlands menacing the right of way, rocking and rolling as it caromed from curve to curve with a clackety-clap sharp and rhythmic.

"We'll pass Phantom Mills purty soon," my companion reminded me after we had ridden half an hour. "Lays' bout a hundred feet b'low th' railroad t' yer left."

"Zat so?" I echoed. "How much farther to Midvale? Hav'ta walk back f'om there."

"Oh—'bout a mile—two miles—mebbe. 'Tain't fur. Thinkin' uv walkin', back up th' track? Better watch out! H—l on hoboes down t' Midvale." I knew that my appearance must have been disreputable, but had no idea it was that extreme, however, I thanked him.

In very few moments I achieved my initial view of the great graystone structure. The flying train careened around a sudden curve and began the descent to the floor of the valley. Along the far side of the mill building flowed a sluggish river which provided the motive energy. Just below where I was sitting the stream widened into a stagnant, dead pool. We rushed upon it—passed it—now it was receding.

In not more than a few seconds I had been whirled thru a scene indelibly impressed in my consciousness. This was the picture I would always conjure when thought reverted to the Phantom Mill. The old mill pond choked with water lilies, a narrow channel of sweet water flowing thru its center, rank weeds, alderberry bushes and wild roses thriving in disorderly promiscuity along its rivages. The structure itself rose two stories, a sprawling pile of masonry architecturally preposterous and unpretentious, but built to endure—now dingy and weather-beaten. On either side rose steep hillsides heavily wooded with a dense growth of young spruce and pine. The towering hills permitted the valley but scant sunlight.

"Darn'dest hole ya ever seed fer bats," my companion startled me from a day-dream. "Fly all day ez well ez all night—reckon down there ain't much diff'rence."

I scarcely heard—wasn't listening—wasn't interested. The thing that intrigued me most was a momentary vision vouchsafed me of a young thing standing at an open window of the second floor as the train flashed by the mill. Being as I was a young man of imagination and vision, I'll never forget that girl; she'll always remain a tangibility of the scene photographed in my sensibility.

At the window back of which stood the figure of the girl were hung no obscuring curtains. One small hand clasped at her breast, the other lifted to her slender throat, we flew so quickly that only indistinctly could I recall her features. On them seemed vaguely stamped a suppressed longing, an inspiration never given words, a formless and half-conceived yearning. Impulsively had she reached out as the train was passing, as if to grasp or detain it. I thought of her as a shackled captive vainly crying out for assistance from passengers deafened by the din of travel. I bored grimy knuckles into smarting eyes—all because a girl had looked from a window at a passing train.

"What's eatin' ya?" sympathized the chap at my side. "Eye fulla cinders er sumpin'?"

"Sumpin' like that!" I nodded admittingly, then, perceiving that an explanation was expected: "Notice that girl standin' at the window?"

"Back t' th' Phantom Mill?"

"Uhuh!"

"Didn't notice—no. Prob'ly Marthy Todd, old Job's kid."

"Likely," I agreed.

BRAKEMEN poked their heads inside the doors at either end shouting in unison some unintelligible jargon that might have been anything but what it was, the name of the station, Midvale. My pulse oddly accelerated, I swiftly followed after the loquacious stranger to the station platform. It was the face of Martha Todd I had traveled from afar to look upon.

Mine was a nomadic existence. I had acquaintances everywhere — formed friendships wherever I went, and never forgot a name or a face.

I checked my bag at the station, bade my companion good-by and started back up the track. The stranger eyed me out of sight, then turned and went on in an opposite direction. Mopping a perspiring brow, I groaned and dragged my feet ahead.

"Came nearly a hundred miles since I stepped off that train. All uphill, too. Oh, well, old boxcar, can't be more'n a hundred miles further to that old mill. Hope Luke gets here with that balky mule in time to take me back to civilization. I'd hate t' walk more'n a million miles like this."

I stepped from the track into a rut-infested cart road paralleling the right-of-way. My course lay over hillocks and dipped into little valleys filled with bowlders half the size of a large washtub. One moment I was slithering down an abrupt incline, the next scaling an eminence as formidable. Where there was no rocks, muck was substituted—mud, the clinging variety—gluey, yellow clay; where there was no mud, all was bowlders. An overhead swish startled me, and, raising my eyes, I encountered a huge bat measuring all of a foot from tip to tip of its wings. "Huh! Flying at midday. Prob'ly have no midday down here." I stepped on a loose pebble that turned with my foot and my ankle was shot with molten lead. I staggered to the roadside and threw myself on the dank turf, unable to proceed further, the moment fraught with danger and the immediate future pregnant with unspeakable possibilities.

I was grimed almost to the waist with sticky mud and my feet were drenched. The air was heavily oppressive and fouled my lungs; nostrils revoltingly contracting at the damp mold, and the lush grass upon which I was lying dripped dank moisture. I pulled my watch from my pocket—it was high noon—two hours since I had passed the Phantom Mill, and I had intended returning to the city the same day. In desperation I staggered up and with my pocket knife improvised a staff from a roadside sapling, and by its aid was enabled to slowly proceed.

At the termination of a century of agony the cart road debouched and I stood before a doorway at the rear of the grim structure. Bats! Bats. More bats! Million of 'em. The air seethed with winging, gliding and darting bats—grewsome, frightful, horrible, repulsive. A rap at the door was answered by the girl at the window.

And here permit a poor scribbling hack to own to a poverty of superlatives too meager to adequately depict the vision my eyes feastingly dwelt upon. From the moment my eyes had come to rest upon this squalid territory, an immeasurable revulsion and loathing had risen within my breast—now was the depression born of a gloomy aspect dispelled by the glorious sunshine of an houri's smile. The pulchritude of the nymph did not so much astonish me—I had thought only of her as beautiful—a regal goddess of this bats' rookery. She held her arms enfolded in an apron of cheap material, but the very gesture gave to the gingham the texture of something clinging and silken.

For an infinitesimal split second the office of articulation deserted. I was abashed as any mere male might be who had surprised a coterie of forest nymphs at their orisons. She smiled! Ye gods of primal masculinity! The set of those faultless features shattered the gloom and filled the valley with golden sunbeams.

Her face became faintly roseate as if resenting indulgence in forbidden romance—her armor of frigid reserve had been lowered a bit—I surrendered to an impulse of good-natured chuckling.

"How do? G'morning!" I capered like a marionette. It was no more than a few seconds since the girl had appeared in that doorway—yet much can happen a masculine heart in a few seconds.

"How do you do?" She was precise, precision itself. She lunged at her braided hair hanging down over her shoulder like a Chink's queue, doubtless thinking me amused at sight of it.

"My name is Baldwin Hatch," I ventured. "I'm a lawyer from Paducah."

"You could scarcely be lynched for that alone." The maiden was facetious as well as precise. Suddenly she observed my injury and instantly became transformed into a ministering angel. "What has happened your ankle?"

"Twisted some, I reckon—stepped on a loose pebble—be awright in a little——"

"Come inside," she commanded; she knew better—"a sprain doesn't mend in a moment." She grabbed a chair and pushed it toward me. "Sit here, and rest your injured ankle on this stool while I get water and something to bind it with."

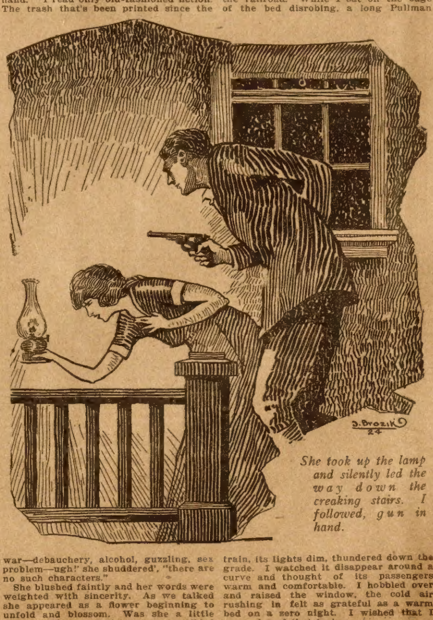
Meekly I obeyed. I would as readily have jumped into the stagnant slime of the mill pond had she so commanded. I stripped off shoe and sock, rolled up the leg of my trousers and elevated my foot on the stool. She came with a basin of cold water and strips of water and examined the injury with a seeming indifference or unconsciousness that there was more of me than a sprained ankle. She put her fingertips to the joint with a slight pressure—her warm touch made my blood race—the ankle was badly swollen and discolored; felt hard and puffy to her touch. She bound it tightly with a damp cloth then assisted me to an old-fashioned hair-cloth couch at the side of the room. "Sit here and lift it up. I'll find you something to eat."

"You must be lonesome living here all by yourself." It was a bungling effort at conversation and I was sorry a moment later when her eyes turned to meet mine, for in their depths was stark tragedy.

"But I am not alone," she told me. "Uncle Jud and two of his men, a half-breed named Pierre Latouche and a Swede named Hugo Larsen, are stopping here. Then, I am fond of books," indicating a row neatly stacked on a shelf at my elbow.

"What sort you you like best? History, romance, adventure, travel—the latest best sellers——"

She interrupted with a gesture of her hand. "I read only old-fashioned fiction. The trash that's been printed since the war—debauchery, alcohol, guzzling, sex problem—ugh!' she shuddered', "there are no such characters."



She took up the lamp and silently led the way down the creaking stairs. I followed, gun in hand.

She blushed faintly and her words were weighted with sincerity. As we talked she appeared as a flower beginning to unfold and blossom. Was she a little faker? Was such innocence possible? And in my absorption I lost sight of the business that had brought me to this abode of a fairy. She placed food upon the table and urged me to partake of it, which I was anything but loathe to do.

"I like to fish, too," she went on. "I have a boat and the trout have come back. I caught a darling in the pool this morning—two-pounder!"

"Huh! You won't offend me none by leading me to that pool." Then I remembered that which had brought me here. "Shucks! If I could spare the time—but I've got to get away from here today. I've been named administrator of your father's estate, you see—I'm a busy guy—gotta get back t' Paducah. Tough, isn't it?"

She smiled a wan little grimace and shook her head. "Not with that ankle. You'll be lucky to get away short of a week," she assured.

Conversation drifted away from that topic and became desultory and casual—mostly concerned with books and fish. She busied herself clearing away the remains of my luncheon, I meanwhile following with avid eyes her lithe movements. I watched her gather together the soiled dishes and stack them, puffing absently at my pipe, and, at last, unable to restrain the impulse:

"Mind if I help?" I pleaded. "I learned in the Army to wash dishes."

"Why, it's nothing at all," she protested.

"Oh, I have sisters," I told her; "I know that girls detest washing dishes—besides, I'm fond of exhibiting my skill. But you can wipe off what I fail to wash off," I suggested.

At that she laughed softly, and then began the gay and meaningless that makes such moments pass swiftly and pleasantly. Finished, she told me: "You're wonderful—as a K. P. you're a wizard."

Dusk had fallen. "Let's go outside," I suggested, "I'd like to take a look at the moon." She agreed. And in the moonlight I was soon calling her Martha and she was calling me Baldy—and that's how it happened; s'help me.

SHE showed me to the room in which I was to sleep. "I'll have to get you one of father's old nightshirts, if you don't mind," she said. She went away while I watched the halo of her radiance recede and diminish. In a moment she returned bearing a folded white garment which she handed me.

"I guess Uncle Jud and his men are not coming back tonight. Good night!" She closed the door and was gone, but not before I glimpsed her troubled face and achieved that the girl was gripped by a fear I could not fathom.

"Good night," I called after her softly in accents that spoke volumes.

The window of my room overlooked the railroad. While I sat on the edge of the bed disrobing, a long Pullman train, its lights dim, thundered down the grade. I watched it disappear around a curve and thought of its passengers warm and comfortable. I hobbled over and raised the window, the cold air rushing in felt as grateful as a warm bed on a zero night. I wished that I were aboard that train.

Bats flew in at the open window, circled the room and flew out again; dead and dying leaves rustled; disintegrating tree branches crackled and an owl hooted a dismal alarm while a threnody of melancholy frog grand opera came from the rivages of the stagnant mill pond. The air was alive with humming and complaining insects and I thought Panther Hollow the most isolated and dreary spot on earth. Too lonesome to sleep, I merely dozed.

I am not sure what it was startled me, but out of potential sleep I was abruptly catapulted into wakefulness sans a customary drowsy interlude. I sat up in bed—a hush had fallen upon the world. Then a chilling dampness struck into the marrow of my bones. I put my feet on the floor and something furry and warm brushed against them and two points of yellow and green flame shot athwart the blackness. I struck a match and in the flare a huge black cat became visible.

Then came voices. I became conscious of a subdued yet animated argument and my senses became alert. Outside the wind had ceased and the words of the disputants became almost audible, snatches of loud talk drifted from below, but just at that crisis another train bowled thru the night, the shriek of its whistle shattering the silence, wheels roaring and rumbling, its stack belching red-hot cinders and stifling smoke. The engine was come and gone with a white-hot glare from its firebox, a cloud of steam and the scream of steel against steel—the final sleeper came trundling behind with a ridiculous rumbling and clatter, its brake-shoes resembling a huge pinwheel in the sparks emitted. When the train had gone the argument had ceased.

I laid down again. Something jarred the bed—shook the building. The wind was rising again. Unable to close my eyes, again I jumped from the bed, struck another match and looked at my watch—4 o'clock—dawn three hours distant—if the barrier of wooded hillsides did not intervene. A mouse or rat gnawed and scurried and squeaked under the flooring—here and there loose beams of the structure creaked and groaned.

I became obsessed by the notion that some one was stealthily trying the knob of my door—peering thru the keyhole—listening. I tried to dispel the fancy but it persisted. I sat on the side of the bed and resumed my clothing—the springs creaking under my weight and the door creaking against the jamb under pressure of the wind. I had thought some of locking that door before retiring and was sorry now that I hadn't. Any person so inclined might walk right into the room. It was lucky that I had thought to transfer my automatic to my pocket before checking my bag at the station; its possession imparted a sense of security.

Fully dressed, I lit my lamp, walked in my socks to the door and flung it wide. A shapeless bundle fell at my feet, limp and lifeless. Merciful Father! The shapeless mass assumed the all but swooning form of the woman I loved. What had happened or was about to happen? How came she here? I was on the verge of asking a terrified question when she raised an admonishing finger of silence to her lips, mute appeal in her big eyes. Now she was whispering:

"Uncle Jud and his men are in the mill room plotting to rob and murder you, abduct me, and fire the building. I didn't tell you— I was ashamed—for several nights those men have been bidding with my uncle for possession of me. You know that here there is no law except that of might." The girl shuddered.

"Wait here a moment," I tiptoed back to the bedside and put on shoes, then rejoined the girl, a glow of pride suffusing me in the knowledge that in the face of her own dire peril she had risked protecting me.

"Uncle Jud whipped me before he went away," she confessed. "Cursed horribly because I wouldn't consent to marriage with one of his men." She took up the lamp and silently led the way down the creaking stairs, I followed gun in hand.

"Is there no way of escape from here other than walking?" I asked.

"Yes," she whispered, "my boat is moored just outside the mill door. We can row down the river to Midvale and get assistance."

We arrived at the ground floor. The air seemed to prickle my flesh. Martha shudderingly caressed my cheek with a cold little hand and pointed with a quivering finger to a crevice in the partition thru which penetrated light. Stealing over the shaky floor and glueing an eye to the crack, I saw naught but an empty room and the sound of voices had ceased.

"There's no one there," I assured the girl in my natural tones and to prove it took the lamp from her hand, walked boldly to the door and jerked it open.

"They heard us come down the stairs and are waiting outside," she suggested.

"You mustn't worry," I abjured, "men of their calibre always bluster. In the main they're a harmless lot. But we're not taking any chances—we'd better take your boat and row down to Midvale. Then—and—then—er—you're going back to Paducah with a man who loves and appreciates you." Her answer was a soft pressure on my arm.

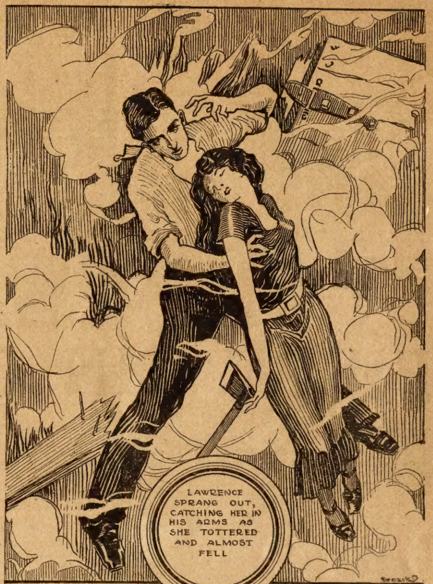
She wrapped her shawl closer. I threw open the door and boldly ventured forth confronted by the half-breed, evidently

(Continued on Page 22.)

THE RESURRECTION OF TOBE

When Tobe Went Away No One Missed Him Much But Leona, and When Tobe Came Back He Remembered No One Much But Leona — and He Came Near Losing Her Before the Moonshiners Got Thru With Him.

BY CHARLES GORDON



LAWRENCE SPRANG OUT, CATCHING HER IN HIS ARMS AS SHE TOTTERED AND ALMOST FELL

HE WAS the shyest of the mountain boys that lived in the Kentucky backwoods hamlet of Helton, and Tobe was the only name he had ever known. No one knew his age, but he looked to be about 12, and it was a pathetic scene to see him trudging from house to house as every few days his home changed from one hospitable neighbor's abode to another.

But tho his home was nowhere and he was forced to take only what others thought to give him, he was no laggard and he paid his board wherever he went, making himself useful by chopping wood, hoeing corn in the fields, or doing any other odd jobs that needed the meager skill which he possessed. There was no more industrious lad—or man—in the little village than he, and his benefit to the community would have been inestimable if he had had the advantage of a home and parents. As it was, he was kept at hard work by the persons that happened to be sheltering him for the time being, and the grim struggle for existence and the tragedy that his young life was bound up in would have made a sour cynic out of the least pessimistic individual, tho it only tempered his soul with an almost noble sense of duty and gave him an altruistic view of life that is accorded to few persons of mature years.

There was only one person in Helton who had in any degree probed beneath his stolidly serene exterior, and that, strangely enough, considering his shyness, was a girl, Leona Traymen, then 10 years old. The first money Tobe had secured, a nickel given him by a drummer for carrying a heavy sample case from the station to the only store in the village, had gone to purchase a piece of tin cut into the shape of a watch and with a dial painted on one side, which he had presented to her, secretly, with as much pride as tho it had been a crown of gold; and, in truth, is was more treasured by the recipient.

It is not strange that Leona was the only one who mourned for him when one summer he disappeared, without a word to anyone to indicate where he had gone. No one had taken the trouble to search for him, considering that his disappearance was merely an incident in the scheme of things that made it necessary for them to spend their lives toiling for a meager living. In time the little orphan boy became only a very dim memory, none seeming to care what might have been his fate, except, perhaps, the girl who had been his only confidante.

TEN years had gone by, with the usual changes the passing years bring—or leave. The village had undergone more radical change than most of the people. Leona Traymen's parents had died, and she, by working hard, had risen to the position of school-teacher in Helton, a position that was almost without a peer in the little town. She still lived in the old home, which had, however, been converted into quite a presentable building with the money she could spare from her meager earnings. She had passed her twentieth birthday, and there was not another girl of that age in town who was not married, but she had remained single, seemingly not interested in any of the native youths.

One evening she stayed at the schoolhouse as usual after the noisy crowd of pupils had left for their respective homes, to grade some examination papers. This was never a pleasant nor an easy task, as the writing was almost indecipherable and most of the words had to be guessed at, but on this particular day the task seemed more irksome than usual, and it was nearing dusk when she finally locked the door and left the schoolhouse, lunch basket in her hand and a book under her arm.

As she stepped into the path that led to her home she paused in surprise, her gaze held by a stranger who was coming toward her. He appeared to be scarcely older than herself, and his appearance suggested that he had journeyed from some city, as his clothes were of a finer grade than any worn in town. His suit was of a dark brown that almost matched his shoes, and under his open coat blossomed a striped shirt that was in striking contrast to the blue and red flannel one that were the townsmen's Sunday best. His stiff straw hat was another innovation. He paused before the girl, who was still staring at him in surprise, doffed his hat in courtly style, and spoke.

"Are you Leona Traymen?" he inquired.

"Yes," replied Leona, wondering how the stranger had come to know her.

The young man suggested that they walk on. "Does the Widow Roberson still keep boarders?" he asked, as they went along the path, Leona leading the way.

"Yes," answered the girl.

"Then I suppose I might as well put up there, for the time being, at least," continued the stranger. "And as we're going to be neighbors, I hope we will become better acquainted. My name is Laurence Elder."

The girl paused to gravely take his hand, and then they went on again, soon coming to Leona's home. There they parted, the stranger proceeding toward the home of Widow Roberson, who lived a few rods above the Traymen cabin on the hill. It was now supper time, and Leona busied herself in the kitchen, thinking as she prepared the simple meal of the stranger and wondering why a man of such evident intelligence and refinement should visit Helton. After supper she went out on the porch to read the book she had brought from the schoolhouse. She had been reading only a few minutes when she heard a step, and looking up saw Laurence coming down the path, hat in hand and smiling.

"I have come down to get acquainted," he said as he came up. "I hope you don't think I'm rude, but I feel as tho we had known each other a long time, and I want to talk with you."

Leona started to enter the house to get a chair for him, but he told her not to mind about the chair, and sat with his legs dangling over the edge of the porch, his shoes brushing the tall grass below. He proved to be very friendly, and soon they were conversing without any reticence or shyness. But the subject of the stranger's arrival in the village was not discussed, nor was there any reference made to his past life. He remained for over an hour, leaving with evident reluctance, after bidding her good-night and receiving permission to come again.

When he had gone back up the path Leona sat for some time thoughtfully contemplating the dark shadows beyond the porch. Then she entered the house and lit the oil lamp in the front room, and came back for the book which she had left lying on the porch. As she picked it up a tall, ungainly figure in a slouch hat stepped around the corner of the house and up to the side of the porch, so that the light from within the house fell on his angular form, revealing a heavy, slovenly stubble of corn-colored beard and two eyes that gleamed like lights from under his overhanging brows. Leona recognized the man as Clint Fletcher, who made his living by brewing potions from the ripe kernels of corn and fruit.

"Who wus that feller that wus here?" he asked gruffly.

"I don't know anything much about him, except that his name is Laurence Elder," replied Leona, stepping back into the doorway.

"Stranger, huh?" said Fletcher, leaning against the porch. "Don't like his looks — these dudes that wears their sporty socks an' shirts an' idles their time away 'll bear watchin'." It was a well-known fact that he did not overexert himself very often. "I'll keep a' eye on him. He might be one o' them sneakin' revenue guys that's always pokin' their nose in somebody's business."

Leona did not trouble to say that her sentiments concerning the stranger were different, but entered the house, and the tall mountaineer ambled off into the darkness, muttering under his breath.

The next evening Leona found Laurence waiting for her when she started home from the schoolhouse. This time they walked more slowly, loitering to pick wild flowers that grew by the path in profusion. They talked as intimately as tho they had been life-long friends, and the following days were brighter for the girl than any she had known in years. She took a renewed interest in life, and somehow since the stranger's arrival her tasks seemed less tedious and the usually dull pupils quicker to learn. Had she known it, Laurence's thoughts dwelt often on her trusting brown eyes and her scarlet lips, as richly red as the roses that thrived in her yard.

NOR was Leona the only person in Helton interested in Laurence. Clint Fletcher observed his promise to keep an eye on him, and had the girl but known it there were eyes watching their every action when she never dreamed that any one was near. Fletcher dogged the young man's footsteps when the latter strolled in the woods, which he did occasionally, and at such time the mountaineer's pistol was always in evidence. As Laurence remained in Helton and showed no inclination other than to hunt or read at his boarding house or walk with Leona, which he did almost every day, Fletcher's suspicion that the young man had come to the village for a purpose that boded him—Fletcher—no good, became a certainty. He had based his judgment on the first conclusion that came to him, and his vigilance increased. His partner, Jason Fenley, was unaware of these proceedings. Fenley was getting too old to go about much, and of late a growing purpose had been taking form in his mind, a purpose that did not coincide with Fletcher's plans.

Fenley was nearing 60, and of late he found it necessary to assist his rheumatic legs with a cane. Thirty years ago he had built the stillhouse up the hollow, hiring Fletcher and other men to operate the still when he was too old to attend to it himself. But now that his years were lying heavily on him and his idleness gave him much time for thought, he was beginning to see that his life had not been all that a virtuous life should be, and soon he came to see that no possible good could come from the brewing of liquor, and a great deal of harm was certain to be done by it, for sooner or later the increasing vigilance of prohibition officials he saw would ensnare himself and his partners in the toils of the law, with a term in the penitentiary a certainty.

So while Fletcher was making plans that did not augur well for the stranger, his old partner was trying to decide the day when the still would be no more a permanent fixture in Helton. He saw Fletcher only occasionally now, and therefore neither knew of the other's plans. And there was also an element in Fletcher's scheming that had nothing to do with Laurence. He was watching his partner's growing infirmity with a careful and calculating eye, and he knew that it would not be long until the business would be his own. Then he would be a potent power in the little community, and his egotism could be satisfied.

Unaware of these hidden things, Laurence serenely went his way, which led most often to Leona's door. It was being whispered in the village that they were engaged, but, so far, to all outward appearances, there had been nothing of a serious nature between them—only an ardent friendship. Leona had often wondered where the young man was from and what his past had been, and one day when she and Laurence went up into the woods above Mrs. Roberson's boarding house with a crowd of eager children to gather hickory nuts she heard a story that surprised her more than anything she had listened to in her life before.

First, meeting her glance with a slight smile, Laurence told her that he was Tobe, the erstwhile orphan whom she had known as a lad. She could not believe that such a miracle as had transformed him was possible until he had explained how he had run away on that day ten years before had journeyed to a distant city, where he had found a kindly old couple who had taken him in and given him an education. But what he considered the most important was that from his benefactors he learned that his parents had perished in a hotel fire when he was a baby, and that his real name was Laurence Elder.

Leona listened raptly as he quietly, yet with a dramatic power that was surprising, related the happenings since the day he left Helton behind. But soon they were interrupted by the return of the children from the ridge above, demanding that Laurence go over the hill in search of more trees under which they could gather nuts. Whispering something to Leona, Laurence laughingly did as he was bidden, leaving the children grouped about the girl who taught them at the little clap-board schoolhouse.

Laurence wandered farther than he had intended, and was surprised when a man stepped out behind him from a clump of laurel. The man was Fletcher, and there was a dangerous glint in his eyes as he leveled a revolver and commanded Laurence to precede him along the winding path that led the young man knew not where. But he soon found out, for in a moment they arrived at the stillhouse, behind which was a cave in a steep cliff. Laurence was pushed roughly into the cave, and Fletcher secured the door that had been set in the rock, with a padlock, then went into the reeking stillhouse, where three other men were lounging.

"Well, I got that feller," Fletcher announced with an air of deep satisfaction.

"Is he one o' them revenue guys, like you said?" asked one of the men.

"If he is he won't do us no harm," declared Fletcher grimly, as he filled and lit a black pipe. Absently he flipped the match away, and by chance it fell into the half-filled tub that caught the liquor as it dripped from the distilling apparatus. The alcohol sputtered and instantly the tub was flaming. The men sprang to their feet in alarm. In the confusion one of them tipped the tub over with a stick, and the burning liquid spread over the floor like ignited oil.

"You blame fool!" Fletcher shrieked. "What'd you do that fer?"

The flames hungrily licked at the walls of the room, threatening to engulf the men, who rushed outside in panic. It was only a moment until flames were shooting thru the doors and windows, and the men saw that it would be almost impossible to save the building. Then Fletcher suddenly remembered the prisoner in the cave, but the flames were already hot enough to almost blister any one who attempted to reach the heavy wooden door of the cave, and Fletcher's cowardly heart shrank at the thought of personal danger.

"We're in fer it now!" he yelled. "We better be leavin'!" With a last look at the burning building he plunged into the woods and ran as tho pursued by demons, his frenzied companions thrashing close behind and almost running over each other in their haste.

Laurence had heard Fletcher and the men yelling, and peeping thru a crack he saw that the building was afire, as the men deserted him and entered the woods in panic. He realized in an instant just how grave his position was, and he helplessly watched the flames creep back toward the cave as they burned into the rear of the stillhouse, knowing that he was doomed to a terrible death unless aid came very soon. Thru the agonizing minutes he waited, while hope slowly left him. He could already feel the intense heat entering the cave, and he knew that it would not be long after he was forced back to the farther end of the cave until the creeping death came.

LEONA had waited for Laurence to return, and when she considered that he should have been back for some unaccountable reason she became alarmed and sent the children home. Then she hurried over the ridge to look for him, her trained eyes noticing the two pairs of footsteps in the path. Because she knew what was in the hollow to which the path lead she realized that if Laurence had gone there he was in danger. She had seen that Fletcher had suspicions concerning the young man, and fearing for his safety she started toward the stillhouse, running fleetly.

Thru the thickening haze of smoke Laurence had seen her coming, and to attract her attention he began to shout and beat on the door with a stick. Leona heard him, came nearer, and finally recognized and located the sound that had attracted her. When she realized that Laurence was in the cave behind the burning building, now completely enveloped in flames, she almost swooned with fright. But she knew that if she were to save him there was not a minute to be lost.

Seeing an ax lying near, she snatched it up and stumbled over the rough ground thru a rolling cloud of yellow smoke to the cave door. With the choking smoke swirling about her and the flames reaching out their lurid tongues for her, she set to work desperately to cut out the staple that held the lock, swinging the heavy ax with all her strength and praying for courage. The smoke was so thick that she could hardly breathe, and the intense heat almost blistered her tender skin, but she dared not think of giving up and she never faltered. Finally, when she thought that the last of her strength was gone and everything seemed to be turning black, the lock dropped at her feet, the door swung reluctantly open and Laurence sprang out, catching her in his arms as she tottered and almost fell.

Holding her face close against his coat so that the heat would not reach it, he bent low and ran with her to the open space beyond the flaming stillhouse. He staggered and stumbled many times with his burden, and the heat seemed to shrivel his skin where it was unprotected, but he managed to get thru the pall of smoke and reached a sheltered spot. There he stood gasping and holding Leona until in a moment her eyes opened and she could stand on her feet, tho Laurence still held her closer than was necessary. While he was trying to thank her for having saved his life, and whispering something else also, old Fenley came hobbling up, greatly excited.

"Burned up, huh?" he puffed. "By Hannibal, I'm glad it happened! It'll save me th' trouble of havin' it tore down."

Now seemingly fully recovered, Leona related what had occurred, Laurence explaining the part played by Fletcher. The old man did not appear to be very much surprised to learn of his partner's trick, but he was incredulous, as Leona had been, when she told him that Laurence was none other than the boy whom they had known as Tobe, only grown up.

"No, 'tain't Tobe," he declared, peering at Laurence.

"But I am," said Laurence with a smile, "and to prove it I can tell you everything I did for you when you were laid up with rheumatism one winter."

Fenley's face changed, softened, at this. "Well, well! I guess you air him," he admitted, holding out his hand and afterward patting the girl's shoulder paternally. "An' now I guess you an' Leony 'll be gittin' married?" The deepening color in her cheeks caused him to beam and wink. "That's good. She'll be gittin' a good husband, an' you'll have th' best girl in this state. I reckon you ort to have somethin' to be thankful fer, young man."

"I certainly have," said Laurence soberly as he took Leona's arm, and the three started down the hollow, leaving the smoldering ruins of the stillhouse undisturbed.

THE END.

The Concluding Chapters of

FIFTY TIN CANS

BY YAWDRO TREBOR

IX.

WESTROM did not get far on his appropriated motorcycle. Lack of familiarity with such a means of conveyance brought him to grief less than five miles from his start. After tinkering with the machine an hour he abandoned it by the wayside and returned on Shank's ponies to the Lovett mansion.

Thru weariness rather than intention, his approach to the house took on an aspect of caution. He wished to reach his own room and rest his tired legs before even concerning himself with future plans. The desire to follow the automobile party had been prompted not so much by any lively suspicions as to its designs as by a strict adherence to instructions received long before, not to let the "old girl" get by with anything while he was not watching.

Stealthiness encountered its own image in the Lovett reception hall. Possessed of a key, Westrom had quietly let himself in the front door. Hardly had he crossed the hall and started up the stairs, his softly placed feet sinking noiselessly into the deep carpets when another figure crossed the same hall with equally careful tread.

It was Kathleen. Her apron was caught up at both the outer corners in the manner in which women make a basket out of it and therein reposed what seemed to be a number of small cans.

Close behind her followed Hop Goon. With his Chinese jacket he had made a smaller basket similiar to that of Kathleen's apron and in it were more of the same small cans.

It had been a dull little clinking of those carefully conveyed cans which had first caught Westrom's attention. The man had stood in plain sight beside the bannister, his eyes intent upon these passing figures, but for once acute staring had failed to attract the attention of the persons observed. They passed on toward the back of the house, totally oblivious of his presence.

Up the stairs, thru the second floor hall and down the back stairs, the detective, thus abruptly recalled to his task, darted, only to find, upon cautious trial that the door at the foot of the kitchen stairs was locked. It was the first time since the arrival here that this had, to his knowledge, occurred. Redoubling his steps, but this time sticking to the wall side of the stairs, Westrom was in time to see a repetition of the strange procession of the two bearers of mysterious tin cans. This time he fell in behind them at a safe distance. The way was open; every door thru which they had occasion to pass had been thoughtfully propped back. Dodging along from partition to partition, Westrom reached a point from which he could survey, in the distance, the open pantry.

Kathleen and the Chinaman were carefully piling up the tin cans on the back of a shelf. Many more of the same kind already reposed there. When those just brought had been placed, the Chinaman said something in a voice too low for the observer to hear. The girl nodded an affirmative answer and the cook began to pile in front of those baffling cans, row upon row of ordinary canned vegetables, tomatoes, peas, corn, pineapple and similar familiar objects of the careful housekeeper's "emergency shelf."

All thought of weariness banished before this new, fascinating mystery; Westrom made his way as rapidly as caution would permit back to the front door, slipped out it thru shrubbery to the street and out of sight down the thorofare. When he appeared at the Lovett mansion two hours later he was covered with dust of travel which his genuine tramp had not scattered upon him. He came shuffling in openly along the driveway to the back door and entered with heavy tread.

"Why you no come to lunch, you no hungry?" Hop Goon inquired casually.

"You bet I'm hungry, d—n hungry," Westrom replied gruffly. "Get me out some grub, Hop. I can use it—I've been walking for hours."

"Where you walk?" the Chinaman asked.

"None of your d—n business," Westrom sourly told him. The reply, he knew, must reach Kathleen, who had just entered.

The opportunity for which the man waited did not come for several hours. Feigning weariness he calmly appropriated a couch in the living-room, despite a caustic inquiry from Kathleen as to whether he considered himself master of the establishment. Hop Goon he had seen shuffling out to the garage, where the cook had a room. From his place of rest he could command a view of the door to the dining-room and thence to the kitchen, but Kathleen seemed constantly about.

The girl was uneasy. Westrom's appearance seemed so to have disconcerted her that the man began to wonder if the motorcycle had not been left in the garage as a bait for him. That the suspicions of Mrs. Lovett and her satellites that he was a detective had become almost a conviction, he had cause to believe. What more natural, if they wanted him away for a time, than to play upon his zeal, have Mrs. Lovett depart ostensibly on a trip and leave that motorcycle where he could take it to follow?

Almost as a confirmation of his half-formulated conclusion, the purr of a high-class auto coming up the drive smote his ears. Kathleen, who was in the reception hall, jumped to open the door. At the same moment Westrom jumped for the kitchen. He had not been slow to see his chance. His sudden rush from the living-room was explainable upon the motive that he did not want to be discovered occupying the couch. His going by the kitchen and back stairs was necessary as the way was blocked to the front ones.

Wasting not an instant, the man darted into the kitchen, pushed aside the several heaped rows of ordinary canned goods which stood on one of the shelves, seized one of those mysterious tin cans which he had seen carefully placed here, put back the outer camouflage so the removal would not be suspected, and raced up the stairs. He paused only long enough on the second floor to learn, by recognition of voices, that the party in the auto was none other than Mrs. Lovett and her two friends, and continued on to his own room on the third floor.

Continuing to work feverishly, as if time was of the greatest importance, yet handling this tin can as gingerly as he might a bomb, Westrom broke the paper seal which ran across the top, laughing, as he did so, at the label, "New Orleans Molasses." The top was of the sort which could be lifted with a knife. Inside was a mass of dirty cotton, packed to secure from shaking the real contents of the can, a tin-foil wrapped package of Chinese labeling which no person that ever has seen contraband opium could mistake.

With a smile of satisfaction that was none the less triumphant because none was near to observe it, the man replaced the lid, gummed the carefully split paper back in place with a little paste taken from his bag and put the can in a hip pocket. Beneath his loose coat it made no noticeable bulge. He was not as intent on returning this can as he had been on obtaining it.

Mrs. Lovett he found in a haughty mood, his first experience with that quality in her, and, he suspected, assumed to hide chagrin at finding him here. She reproached him severely for not having been ready to open the door for her and delivered a ten-minute lecture upon the duties of house servants always to be ready, during their employer's absence, for an unexpected return.

Miss Curtin and Spiers, while lacking their friend's haughtiness, plainly were in the dumps. But the woman, by her open expressions of disappointment, brought to Westrom his first knowledge of the cause of this abandonment of the San Diego excursion. Openly ignoring the servant, during a dinner at which Mrs. Lovett herself did not partake, having been served in her room, the plump Aline remarked:

"How notional Mrs. Lovett is getting! The idea of starting for San Diego like that and then turning back, just because of that horried chauffeur. The idea of her listening to his grumpiness, pretending the car wasn't equal to the trip, after that little trouble he had with it. I'll bet that was all put on; he didn't want to have to take that long drive."

"Maybe," the taciturn Spiers responded. "Whatever made her do it, I wish she hadn't. This house is about as exciting as a tomb—I'd like to see a little of the gayety of California I've heard about."

"So would I!" ejaculated Miss Curtin, and continued her commiserations with herself and her silent companion thru the dismal meal.

Mrs. Lovett, soon after her private dinner, summoned the cook to her apartment. The message calling him, delivered by Kathleen, carried the information that her food had not exactly pleased her. How pleased was her house servant at that particular displeasure, she could not know for it gave him the opportunity he craved to return the little can of opium. This time he paused long enough to put the removal can well down in a pile of its fellows. A careful count showed the prowler that here were fifty such cans. He well knew that every one of them must be worth two hundred dollars. Ten thousand dollars in easily marketable opium reposing on a pantry shelf!

"YOU are dead sure this is opium? We have no clews of any such amount having been brought in recently."

The United States marshal, in pajamas, regarded his midnight visitor with questioning eye.

"Mr. Marshal, the collector of the port of New York is not likely to have on his detective force a man who cannot recognize opium," Westrom answered, looking the none-too-enthusiastic official square in the eye. "We did not suspect this woman of opium smuggling when I was put on the case. We only knew she seemed queer, traveled a lot and had all the earmarks of a clever gem runner. Plainly she took pains to create the impression as a cover to the opium work."

"If you are right, some one must be d—n careless along the border," the marshal commented. "I'll have to jack up,my force."

"I hardly believe any member of your force has been negligent. My own theory is that this stuff did not come in on your district," Westrom volunteered.

"Just what do you mean? Where do you think it came from?"

"Either the madam had it with her all the time or that Chink cook brought it aboard at Kansas City. In that case this chauffeur, Thomas Goldberg, whom I am sure is a member of the gang, was determined to have all the profits and thought he had got rid of the Chinaman, or Goldberg was afraid of some one on the trail and determined to stop the thing before any one was caught. I incline to the latter theory—he gives me every impression of being afraid of the Chinaman—he killed one Chinese in New York—and he is at outs with Mrs. Lovett, who, on the other hand, is thick with the Chink. I believe Goldberg has a bad case of nerves."

"If we raid the place and grab this stuff we still may not get the real leader of this dangerous gang. We have nothing to prove the old lady knows the dope is there on her pantry shelf. She was away when it was put there; we might get the Chink and the girl, but they are small game compared to her." The marshal knit puzzled brows.

"That's true enough. But can't you put men in the vicinity where I can signal to them the opportune moment for a raid?"

"We might do that all right. You've got to get back, muy pronto, before your absence is discovered, I suppose."

"Yes."

"Well, I'll get a couple of my men out there in her shrubbery before daylight. What will be your signal?"

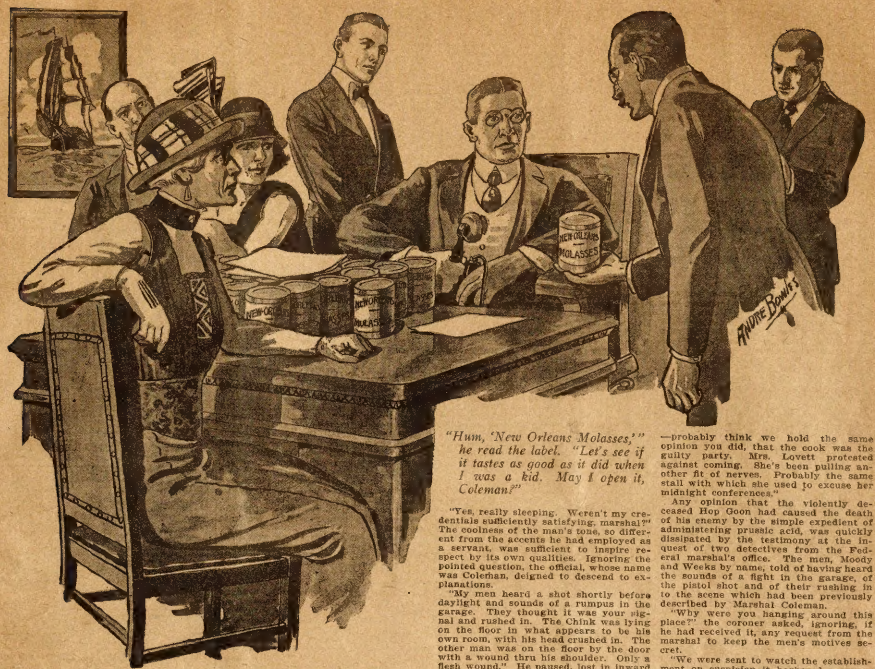
"Better have several. A shrill whistle, a pistol shot, even sounds of a big scrap. I may get caught in a pinch where I can't give any signal."

"Very good; I'll issue orders at once." The marshal took down his telephone receiver with obvious relief at getting rid of this unexpected midnight visitor and returned to his disturbed slumbers.

Westrom had made his exit quietly from the house almost immediately following the departure of the last of the guests, Spiers, who sat for an hour smoking continuous, and, from his facial expression, unsatisfactory cigarettes before the fire. Westrom, instead of retiring, as he presumed the family supposed was the case, if they thought of him at all, had remained hidden downstairs, and making his getaway had been a simple matter. His return was not so easy. He chose to attempt it from the alleyway at the back of the grounds, coming past the garage. He did not pass without a challenge.

"Throw up your hands? Who the h—l are you?"

It was the voice of Thomas, behind the



"Hum, 'New Orleans Molasses,'" he read the label. "Let's see if it tastes as good as it did when I was a kid. May I open it, Coleman?"

blinding flashlight, and a nervous tremor unusual in the burly creature showed in the wavering of the brilliant rays.

"Why, Tommy, what's all the wild-eyed excitement about?" Westrom demanded. "Can't a fellow beat it away from this nut-hatch once in a while without being waylaid on his way back?"

"Oh, it's you! Say, young fellow, what the h—l is your little game, anyhow? You are acting mighty peculiar, strikes me."

"My little game is to get some relief from wondering what's gone wrong up there at the house." Westrom's voice was thick. He reeled a little and in his mind was relief at thought of the drink of contraband which he had taken for its precautionary possibilities, just a moment before. The stuff was still strong on his breath. "Is the old lady sore about something or is she bug or what—what's the matter up there, anyhow? I been seeking di—di—'musement."

He reeled a little more. The flash was darkened. Thomas laid a rough hand on his shoulder, drew him close and sniffed suspiciously. Then he said, not unkindly.

"You better come up to my room. I don't reckon you'll ever make it up the house stairs without starting a riot. Where'd you get the stuff, anyhow?"

"I'll show you some night, good old Thomas," Westrom patted him affectionately. "I'm all right. I'll get there all right. I just got a little biscuit, not a bun a'tall, a'tall, dear old Thomas." He laughed coarsely at his own joke.

"Get along with you, then," the chauffeur gave him a rough shove. "If the old woman shoots you for a burglar don't blame me, you drunken beast. She's pretty handy with a gun herself. But she'll be glad as I am to find out what's been ailing you lately, you poor stew."

He turned resolutely back toward the garage and with studied uncertainty the houseman made his way up the drive toward the back door he had carefully left unlocked. As he passed one of Mrs. Lovett's prize orange trees, the conviction settled upon him that eyes were peering at him from behind it. The very grounds seemed alive with unrest. Putting the strange sensation down to the conclusion that one of the United States marshal's men already was on his post, Westrom continued on his way unheeding and sought a welcome bed after a trip upstairs unmarked by the disturbance which his simulated condition in the yard, if genuine, would have made inevitable.

It was a genuinely heavy slumber into which the tired man fell, a slumber from which the sounds of excitement outside, of whirling autos and loud voices did not awaken him until they had persisted for some time, a short while after daylight. Indeed, it was the nervous, continual call of Aline Curtin, "Westrom! Oh, Westrom!" that finally brought him back to consciousness. He glanced from the window. The driveway seemed lined with autos, an ambulance and several speedy roadsters bearing on their sides official marks.

With a speed born of long experience he fairly sprang into his clothes and dashed down the stairs to the calling woman.

"Westrom, I thought you would never come. You must call all the hospitals until you find one which can send a nurse for Mrs. Lovett. A strong nurse; she is having a terrible spell of her old trouble," Aline instructed, with more capability than he would have thought she possessed.

"What's the matter? What has happened? Has she been in an accident? I saw an ambulance," he asked in genuine bewilderment.

"No. Do as I say! try to obtain a nurse at once. Kathleen is already trying; you assist her."

A moment's hesitation near the telephone in the lower hall convinced Westrom that Kathleen needed no assistance and likewise proved, from the agitation of her efforts, that something was the matter with Mrs. Lovett. Pausing no longer, the houseman went out the back door of the dwelling where he was not destined to return again in that capacity. Two figures, both covered even to their faces with sheets, were being lifted into the ambulance. On the door of one of the waiting autos was the legend, "County Coroner." Another bore the seal of the United States.

In the group beside the ambulance Westrom espied the United States marshal he had sought out the night before at the same instant that that individual noticed him.

"Where have you been?" the marshal demanded. "I wanted to see you. What do you make of it?"

"Of what?" Westrom in his turn asked. "I just woke up. What is all this excitement about?"

"You don't know!" The man led him to one side. "We just piled your friends, the chauffeur and the cook, into the wagon—both dead," he announced in low voice.

"Goldberg and Hop Goon dead! Why, Thomas stopped me as I came in after seeing you last night. Who killed them?"

"Where have you been, sleeping off a shot of hop?" The marshal's eyes were not without suspicion.

"Yes, really sleeping. Weren't my credentials sufficiently satisfying, marshal?" The coolness of the man's tone, so different from the accents he had employed as a servant, was sufficient to inspire respect by its own qualities. Ignoring the pointed question, the official, whose name was Coleman, deigned to descend to explanations.

"My men heard a shot shortly before daylight and sounds of a rumpus in the garage. They thought it was your signal and rushed in. The Chink was lying on the floor in what appears to be his own room, with his head crushed in. The other man was on the floor by the door with a wound thru his shoulder. Only a flesh wound." He paused, lost in inward speculation.

"Was he dead?" Westrom brought him back to the subject.

"No. But he died before they got a doctor here and he was unconscious. Thats' the only mark on his body, that flesh wound." Again the man became silent.

"But what killed him?" Westrom insisted.

"That's what we can't figure out," the marshal replied. "The autopsy the coroner is going to have performed immediately ought to show us."

XI.

"PRUSSIC acid."

The marshal looked challengingly at Westrom as he made the announcement. He had just come from the inner room of the autopsy surgeon's laboratory, where that individual was making a rush examination of portions of all that remained of Thomas Goldberg, late chauffeur.

"The Chink's wily work!" Westrom exclaimed, with a whistle of enlightenment. But on the face of Coleman, the United States marshal, appeared a questioning, satirical expression.

"You have been in the family. You ought to know," he commented.

"Just what are you driving at?" the customs detective demanded, the look not lost upon him.

"We found the bottle of prussic acid in the room of this fellow Spiers. According to your story Spiers was close to the old lady, who had quarreled with Goldberg. The Chink may not have been responsible at all. I'm of the opinion that when Goldberg began to feel sick he suspected the Chinaman had poisoned him and went in there to accuse Hop Goon, they got to fighting, and the cook was killed. The chauffeur was wounded, but he died of poison, really."

"Sounds plausible. Have you got Spiers?" Westrom himself was of a different opinion but he had found, from long experience, that politically appointed Federal officers know more, in their own estimation, than their trained assistants. Spiers looked too much the sinister villain of fiction to convince the operator of his real devilishness. Westrom had long since set him down merely as a parasite, preying upon the fortune and good nature of Mrs. Lovett. Why she permitted such tactics, which she was too shrewd not to recognize, he had never been able to decide.

"Not only Spiers—the whole bunch of them. I've sent up for them to come down here for the inquest, the coroner has called for this afternoon. They don't know any one of them is suspected—probably think we hold the same opinion you did, that the cook was the guilty party. Mrs. Lovett protested against coming. She's been pulling another fit of nerves. Probably the same stall with which she used to excuse her midnight conferences."

Any opinion that the violently deceased Hop Goon had caused the death of his enemy by the simple expedient of administering prussic acid, was quickly dissipated by the testimony at the inquest of two detectives from the Federal marshal's office. The men, Moody and Weeks by name, told of having heard the sounds of a fight in the garage, of the pistol shot and of their rushing in to the scene which had been previously described by Marshal Coleman.

"Why were you hanging around this place?" the coroner asked, ignoring, if he had received it, any request from the marshal to keep the men's motives secret.

"We were sent to watch the establishment on suspicion it harbored a smuggler," Moody, the witness, responded.

A little gasp escaped the plump Aline Curtin; her face went pale and then flushed with the deep red of fleshy persons. Irving Spiers looked as if he had seen a ghost, the paleness which suffused his face continued with an intensification of his customary deadly pallor.

But it was not upon these two that the steady, steely glance of Wolcott Westrom was centered. It was upon the countenance of Mrs. Lovett that his eyes focussed. And even his trained observation could detect not the slightest change in the immobile expression that handsome lady had maintained since entering the room, after forcefully expressing her displeasure, outside, at being so unceremoniously brought here as a witness merely because her servants had quarreled among themselves.

Baffled by that mask of calm flesh, Westrom allowed his eyes to stray a fraction of a second and he became aware that Mrs. Lovett had been the target for at least one other searching scrutiny; from the girl, Kathleen O'Brien, who sat by her mistress' side and had turned a frankly inquiring look upon that lady. Kathleen saw her stare was noticed and turned her face aside.

"Who did you think was the smuggler—one of the dead men?" the coroner prsisted in the customary formula of his kind upon such occasions.

"It might have been one of the dead men, or the live one, or one of the women; we weren't told."

"But what made you think there was a smuggler there? This, doubtless, has a bearing upon the cause of these two violent deaths. Please explain yourself, Mr. Moody. What reason had you for supposing this highly respectable home sheltered a smuggler?"

"Because the houseman there," the witness waved an explanatory arm at Westrom, "is a customs house detective from New York, that has been trailing them clear across the continent."

This time a very genuine little gasp of astonishment escaped every member of the Lovett party but one and the one, Madame herself, for one fleeting second allowed a glance of violent hatred to flash at the man whose identity was thus dramatically exposed.

"May I interpose an objection?" the marshal interrupted. "We are not quite ready to show our hand in this smuggling matter. Can't you proceed simply with the more evident aspects of the double murder?" He paused, to meet the scowl of the coroner with the tranquil serenity of one who holds four aces, and then suggested, “My men made a thoro search of the premises.”

Again, for the brief instant, what seemed an involuntary surrender to sternly suppressed emotions caused Mrs. Lovett to lose the mask of frigid displeasure.

“Did you find any of this prussic acid poison that the autopsy surgeon has said he discovered in the body of Goldberg?” The coroner did not call the marshal tho his tone indicated anything but satisfaction at being diverted from the line of inquiry he had been pursuing.

“Yes, we found an opened bottle of it.”

The witness plainly enjoyed the suspense he was creating. He had to be jogged into continuing by the coroner's—

“Where?”

“In the bottom of a drawer in the room the servants say is occupied by this man Spiers.”

There was a crash, and the inanimate form of the fainting Irving lay prostrate on the floor. The coroner rushed to his side, the autopsy surgeon close behind him.

XII.

“MR. SPIERS did not poison Thomas.” Kathleen's blue eyes flashed defiance at the interrogating coroner. She was leaning forward in her chair. Westrom, with a thrill, noted how absent from the girl's manner was any hint of the servility generally expected of a lady's maid. He had felt from the moment of his first sight of this young Irish female creature that here was a person with potentialities far above her station in life; at intervals in his busy investigations he had had time to regret that he found no more favor in her sight.

“How can you be so certain?” Even the flinty coroner smiled a little at Kathleen's intensity.

“Because, I saw Hop Goon hiding that bottle of poison in Mr. Spiers' room.”

Spiers himself should, had he been a normal creature, have been entranced by this spirited defense of his so recently assailed character. But the man was hardly yet recovered from the fainting spell which had marked his accusation of murder by the Federal detective. He was reposing on a couch in an adjoining room, while steely-hearted officials resumed the interrupted inquest.

“How did you happen to see him?”

“There has not been much happening in that house I haven't seen.” The girl tossed her head with something of a saucy, meaning movement, at the watching Westrom. “I had to, what with us having a detective at our heels all the time.”

“Did you know Mr. Westrom was a detective?”

“Sure, and I did from the first time I laid eyes on him. Mrs. Lovett wasn't so sure. She didn't see what a detective would be coming into her establishment for. I did—I never liked that dead chauffeur, the Chinaman was better'n him.”

“This is not a question of personal likes.” The coroner turned to Marshal Coleman. “Really, marshal, I must probe a little deeper into this hinted smuggling matter, in order to establish the motive,” he said. “Of course, the girl's testimony does not clear Spiers of all suspicion, but it leads us around the circle and back to the cause for the presence of this detective in Mrs. Lovett's household.”

“But I protest that in doing so you will be hampering the administration of justice by the Federal Department,” Coleman insisted. “You will, inevitably, develop whom we suspect and thus make that particular person so cautious that it will be difficult to apprehend him—or her.”

The official turned his head, as he spoke, to look dramatically, directly at Mrs. Lovett. For the first time at the inquest that lady allowed her face, voluntarily, to relax from the set expression of immobility she had maintained. A mocking smile rippled over her handsome features.

“Even Caesar's wife is not above suspicion?” she inquired in her silvery voice.

“No one, madam, not even your late houseman, is above suspicion. Opium smuggling is not merely a criminal offense, it is a natural crime against humanity.”

“I agree with you, perfectly, my dear marshal. Let us hope you apprehend the guilty party, even tho he may have in the past posed as a customs detective.” Madam's glance at Westrom conveyed only a tolerant amusement.

“We will apprehend the guilty party, provided our gathering here is not being taken advantage of by outside accomplices to remove the evidence which we are sure that house contains, tho we have not yet discovered it.”

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Coleman had taken a step toward Mrs. Lovett as he spoke. Even to less acute observers than he or Westrom the change for a forced air of tranquillity to one of genuine relief in the woman's attitude was perceptible.

“By all means, have the house guarded during my absence. I did not realize in what a lawless community I resided,” she said lightly. “Some one might carry off all the furniture during my absence.”

During her speech, a clerk from the outer office had entered and whispered excitedly to the coroner, who in turn stepped forward to converse in whispers with Coleman.

“Or set it on fire, Madam,” that individual answered her. “I have just been informed that your house is in flames, with the probability that it will be totally destroyed.”

For the second time within the hour a dead faint occurred within the dingy inquest chamber. Mrs. Lovett toppled over even as had her morose male satellite before her. More attention was paid to the woman, after the beating of her heart had been restored to normal, however, and she was much in need of the ministrations showered upon her by the fluttering, incompetent Aline and the determined, angry, but diligent, Kathleen.

For madam had, with the restoration of bodily consciousness, become a sudden victim of violent hallucinations. She seemed an insane woman, withal a gentle one. Constantly she babbled of her child, of her long dead husband, of New York. But not once did there occur in her delirium a mention of Chinese or opium or a fire. She recognized Aline and Kathleen as friendly creatures, even as she repelled certain well-intended efforts of Westrom, who would have assisted in her removal to pleasanter surroundings in a ladies' parlor of the undertaking establishment where the inquest was being held.

In view of the startling developments, that inquisitorial function was hastily adjourned. But neither Coleman nor Westrom departed from the establishment, as did all the Federal and other witnesses and even the coroner himself. They stood about outside the room which sheltered Mrs. Lovett, engaged in earnest conversation.

Perhaps an hour elapsed before the elderly woman was restored to something approaching her former sane condition. As she, finally, walked out the door with a stately tread that well became her, she said coolly,

“Gentlemen, you will, I trust, excuse an old lady's frailty in giving way to her emotions when she hears that a home she dearly loves has been destroyed by flames. I have ordered a car and am going to give myself the melancholy pleasure of looking at the ruins. I will then be at the Glenwood Hotel, where you can find me if I am required further as a witness in this distasteful case.”

With a courtliness equalling her resumed dignity, Marshal Coleman said,

“I regret, Mrs. Lovett, that I cannot allow you to follow such a procedure. But I am required to hold you, since I must now serve on you a warrant charging illegal possession of opium.”

“You mean—what?” The gray-haired lady lost none of her restored self-possession. In her inquiry there seemed only mild curiosity.

“I mean that I think it would be advisable if you will go with me to my office for a conference, before you are arraigned in the United States Circuit Court.”

“Upon what is this ridiculous charge based?”

“Upon the fact that fifty cans of opium were seized from your pantry shelf this morning by our investigators, who were working on the murder case.”

As the entire party, including the marshal, entered a big Government car which had drawn up at the curb, Westrom wondered if he was wrong in believing that he detected in Mrs. Lovett's eyes a hint of real relief. Why should this woman be glad that the opium had been found, instead of being burned up in the fire? He had been, in his own mind, evolving the theory that Mrs. Lovett was in some manner herself responsible for the burning of her house, to conceal the damaging evidence, and that she had simulated her attack of nerves. Yet he could not bring himself to doubt that very genuine comfort which, so momentarily, lighted the usually calm countenance. To solve the enigma he, too, jumped into the big auto, bound for the proposed conference at the United States marshal's office.

XIII.

IT WAS a small conference which, nevertheless, crowded the private room of Mashal Coleman's suite. Mrs. Lovett took little part in its early deliberations, for she had insisted, before she would attend, upon sending for one of the best criminal lawyers of the State and holding a long private consultation with him. While this was going on, Westrom had ventured to inquire of his superior, the marshal,

“Why are you holding this conference, instead of taking her straight into court??”

“Because I can't rid myself of the idea that the old lady is merely a cover, as it were, for the real gang that is importing the smoke stuff. She probably gets a big rake-off, but I think she merely represents a bunch of Chinamen.”

“What about the Chinese that tried to kill her in New York?”

“All the better evidence—they are always fighting among themselves. I'm going to give her a chance at an immunity bath, if she'll come thru with the inside dope.”

Mrs. Lovett showed little inclination to jump into the bath of immunity which Coleman openly offered her, when the assembled conference got down to business. There were present the woman and her attorney, her maid, Kathleen, whom she insisted on bringing along, Coleman, Westrom and the detective, Moody, who had confiscated the fifty cans.

The cans were brought forth at a psychological moment, after Mrs. Lovett had indignantly denied that she even knew what a can of opium looked like. They were piled in imposing array upon the marshal's desk.

“I refuse to be responsible for what my lately deceased Chinese cook did and it must be he who placed these cans where you say you discovered them,” Mrs. Lovett asserted. “I gave him fifty dollars for supplies yesterday; he enumerated a list of what he wanted and I remember he included molasses on it.”

“Do you assume any more responsibility for your other servants?” Coleman demanded.

“You mean this tool of yours, this Westrom?”

“I refer particularly to your maid, the girl sitting beside you.”

Consternation was written upon the two feminine faces. Mrs. Lovett's attorney anxiously interrupted.

“I will not permit this cross-examining of my client. You have arrested her, now proceed in the ordinary legal manner to have her arraigned.”

“That is the last thing in the world I believe she will want, when she hears what we know,” Coleman replied. “Westrom, speak up.”

“Kathleen helped the cook hide the stuff on that pantry shelf,” Westrom announced.

“So you were spying on us, you dirty hound,” Kathleen hissed out the virtual confession before she realized the full import of her own words.

“They came from the direction of Mrs. Lovett's boudoir, altho I could not tell exactly what room they were brought from,” the customs officer went on, evenly.

A little silence which ensued was broken by Coleman's persuasive,

“You see, Mrs. Lovett, we have a better case than you suspect. If it were not that I believe you are the tool, perhaps the coerced victim, of an exceedingly clever gang of smugglers, I should not make you the liberal offer that I do and in which I feel confident I can get the district attorney to concur. Mr. Romaine, do you not think it would be wise to advise your client that open confession is good for the soul?”

With the nervousness that but begot startling sparks of court strategy, the attorney began to pace the room, without replying. As he turned back his eyes in perplexity sought those of his client. Her own, looking straight at his, shot one quick glance at the pile of cans on the table, a significant sign which was not overlooked by at least one other person in the room, Westrom.

As if it were an idle action of his nervous hands, the attorney picked up one of the piled cans.

“Hum, New Orleans Molasses,” he read the label. “Let's see if it tastes as good as it did when I was a kid. May I open it, Coleman?”

“Go to it,” Coleman answered.

The lawyer drew out and opened his knife, cut the label seal, raised the slip-in top, and thrust his knife blade down inside.

He drew it forth. Following it was a sticky trail of molasses. With unalloyed satisfaction, the man allowed his tongue to sample the dark substance on his knife blade.

“Don't seem quite as sweet as it used to when I was young,” he commented. “Still it's not bad. Try it, marshal?”

That individual did not deign to reply to the implied taunt. He was on his feet beside the desk, himself feverishly opening another of the cans. The attorney calmly resumed his seat and watched the officer's hasty examination of several of the cans. In every one, from Coleman's face, it was evident he found exactly what the label promised, plain molasses.

Around the inside of each he carefully circulated the paper knife which he had seized up from the desk, but without discovering anything other than the smooth, sticky substance. Not interrupting for an instant his investigations, he angrily exclaimed to Westrom,

“You said there was opium in these cans.”

“There was, in the one I opened,” the operator responded, none too cheerful, himself.

“And you said there was, too,” Coleman directed the words at his own detective, Moody.

“There was. I followed your instructions, located the can this fellow had described to you, opened it and there she was.”

“What is more evident than that this

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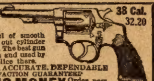

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pseudo-detective, this houseman, is trying to frame up this most estimable lady?" the lawyer demanded, cuttingly. "You better manacle him before he makes a break for liberty."

"Shut up. Here, you, Moody, help me go thru these cans, systematically," Coleman instructed. "Open them one by one, thoroly stir around inside and then set them over on the other end of the desk."

Regardless of where fell the sticky drippings of their activities, the two men worked in silence. Puzzled, anxious, Westrom watched their efforts narrowly, only occasionally glancing aside at the two women and the chuckling attorney. Upon Mrs. Lovett's face was an expression of supreme amusement—she had dropped her unemotional attitude and took no pains to conceal her satisfaction. But Kathleen, plainly, was as puzzled at this development as was Westrom himself.

One by one the cans were transferred from the unopened to the opened pile until the last one was reached. It was in Moody's hands and the man examined its outside closely, before he opened it.

"Go ahead, why dawdle?" the exasperated superior official exclaimed.

"This one ain't my can," Moody announced before he broke the seal. "It ain't been opened before. None of 'em have been. More molasses, I suppose."

His supposition was borne out by the examination. Defiantly he laid it on the pile and faced the chief.

"Well, where's that opium?" Coleman demanded.

"Don't ask me? I don't know nothing about it except that it was there."

"Who had access to these cans beside yourself?"

"Weeks helped me carry them out."

"Did you bring them out immediately you found the opium in the one?"

"Yes, soon's I could call him from the garage."

"Did you leave them alone a minute, then?"

"'Bout ten minutes, I reckon," the detective admitted.

"Mr. Coleman, this is, doubtless, all very interesting to you, but it does not concern my client. She does not care to continue this conference longer. You have arrested her. Will you kindly have her arraigned in order that I may arrange bail, please?"

"Go call the judge," Coleman directed Weeks. "Ask him if he just as soon come here for the arraignment."

Tho he did not say so openly, it was apparent to all present that the marshal had no stomach for taking his distinguished looking prisoner into a regular courtroom at the moment. With the accommodating judge came the district attorney.

"I would move that the prisoner be released on her own recognizance," said the woman's attorney, when the formality of arraignment and entering of a non-guilty plea had been gone thru with.

Hasty conference between the marshal and district attorney was followed by the latter's—

"The prosecution has no objection to the granting of the motion, your honor."

"Throw that d—n molasses out," Coleman instructed his subordinates, as the ceremony ended and the judge left the room.

"Do nothing of the sort," Mrs. Lovett's crisp voice cut in upon the proceedings. "That is my property. It is all I have left from my destroyed home, and I will not give you or your men the satisfaction of taking it home to use on your tables. I have sent my maid to call an enclosed car, that I may ride to the hotel, and I propose to take this with me even if I have to throw it out on the first rubbish dump we can find."

She was as good as her word, standing commandingly by while the liveried chauffeur of the hired car, under her instructions, carried out the sticky cans and solemnly deposited them on the floor of his tonneau. Spiers had been held by the county authorities in the poisoning case. Kathleen, Mrs. Lovett had sent ahead with Aline in a previously hired open car. Before her departure her mistress had handed her a sizable roll of bills and instructed her to engage the best apartment the hotel afforded.

XIV.

"WELL, you've put me in a pretty pickle." Coleman did not even look at Westrom as he spoke, so busy was he glaring at the back of Mrs. Lovett as she climbed into the hired limousine before the Federal Building, upon the steps of which the two men stood.

"Why me? How about your own man letting them switch cans on him? But I haven't time to argue the matter with you."

The big, high-set, old-model limousine was moving away from the curb with the dignified gait of its kind in getting under way. Before the marshal could remonstrate, Westrom had darted down the marble steps, fallen into a run close behind the big car, where he could be seen by neither its occupant nor driver. With a burst of speed he gained its rear before the gears could be changed and speed accelerated and jumped to a seat on the valise rack which such cars in California, where they are frequently hired for touring, always carry immediately above the number and license plate. From the precarious seat he waved a jaunty hand back at the marshal as the car whirled around a corner.

But, tho Westrom had assumed his seat with such ease, he did not maintain it with equal comfort. He had expected a short ride, tho he was prepared not to have Mrs. Lovett go to the hotel whither she had sent Aline and her maid. That that move had been but a subterfuge he had divined when it was made and the suspicion had prompted his jumping on the rear of the limousine. But he had not anticipated that the car would make its way out of the town and head due south on the boulevards which are California's pride. Before they were out of the center of town he overheard the driver of the hired car say,

"Sure, madam, very well."

The speed had been accelerated. Westrom was glad of it, even tho it made more difficult the maintenane of his seat. But, at least, it gave less opportunity to street urchins with pointed fingers to call his presence to the attention of the passenger and chauffeur ahead. Few autos passed going in their direction, and at these Westrom grinned in good-natured manner that seemed to explain his position as a joke. When the machine finally pulled up at the end of what he judged must have been a twenty-five mile drive, lasting nearly an hour, the man clinging on behind was so stiff that it was positive torture for him to jump quickly from his seat and dodge around the car to the side opposite the gasoline station before which they had stopped.

Crouching low beside the auto he heard Mrs. Lovett protesting—

"What are we stopping here for?"

"I must take on some more gas," came the reply, as the man lifted the front seat to reach the old-fashioned gasoline tank.

The supply man, hatless and in shirtsleeves, evidently an old friend from the chatty conversation, appeared from within to pump the fuel in. By the man's silence on the subject, Westrom knew that his own descent from the valise rack had passed unnoticed.

"I must get some oil, too," the driver said, and the two went inside the little building.

Peering around the back of the car, Westrom could see that they went thru an inner door, and he began to suspect that it was illegal lubrication for the human machine rather than for the auto that the driver sought. Mrs. Lovett was sitting erect, bored and inattentive, in the stuffy, closed tonneau. From the back of the machine Westrom darted around the corner of the small structure and looked beyond it. In jovial manner the two men were crossing an open space toward a garage in the rear.

"Old girl's a nut," the chauffeur was saying. "First wanted to go to the Hotel Glenwood and then told me to take her all the way to San Diego. Country driving sure does make a fellow thirsty."

Braving possible detection, basing his daring on the supposition that two thirsty men headed for a drink of thirst—quenching potentialities would hardly glance behind them, Westrom softly stepped out into what would have been their line of vision had they looked back, and entered the door to the supply station which they had just quitted.

His eyes quickly lit on what he sought, the cap and coat of the supply man. Westrom had been quick to note that the man's trousers were in reality chauffeur's knickerbockers and that he wore the conventional leggins. Evidently this was a regular station for the auto livery from which Mrs. Lovett had obtained her car and this man was another chauffeur, ready to assume instant duty. The remainder of his livery was poor fit for Westrom, as he speedily found when he slipped off his coat to drop it behind a barrel of oil, but he decided to chance it. The cap was better and a pair of goggles seized from an adjoining hook completed his disguise.

Boldly, the pseudo-chauffeur stepped from the door of the supply station, carrying in his hand a hastily, random seized gallon can of oil, to place which on the floor of his compartment he found it necessary to stoop over the instant he mounted to the seat. Then, blessing the training which had included acquaintanceship with nearly every make of automobile, he started the engine and was off in a burst of speed before the rightful chauffeur could reach the roadway.

"Not so reckless, please," came buzzing thru the speaking tube at his ear, "I told you to drive fast but carefully."

He inclined an obedient head, without turning it even a fraction of an inch sidewise, and slackened up a little. Evidently, Mrs. Lovett did not know who was piloting her.

XV.

PURELY from the sign posts which dotted the way, Westrom steered the course of the limousine to the south. He was fearful of thus keeping on the main thorofare, lest a faster machine manned by the dethroned rightful driver of this cabin-road-cruiser catch up with him, but he did not dare turn aside to seek other highways, because of unfamiliarity with the country. It was Mrs. Lovett herself who relieved his quandry by calling thru the tube:

"I have decided to go via Escondido and the inland route. Turn east at Oceanside."

Again the man in the driver's seat nodded assent, carefully abstaining from turning his face. From the issuance of the order at this moment he judged that Oceanside was the town he saw just ahead and the ever-present signs enabled him to make the correct turn for Escondido.

Westrom had been carefully studying the rear-sight mirror from time to time, anxiously watching for signs of pursuing vengeance but the machines that caught up with and passed him seemed intent purely on peaceful personal business. He found that by sliding along a little on the seat from time to time he could make the mirror bring him a vision of the determined face of his woman passenger. He did this as they rode thru the main street of the scattering little town and great was his amazement to see that Mrs. Lovett had dropped her air of inattention and was peering nervously out the right-hand side of the car. Suddenly she raised her hand in a wave and beckoning motion.

Forgetful of possible penetration of his disguise, Westrom stared around to see at what she had been looking. Behind them stood the isolated, ramshackle building of a Chinese laundry. Whether or not the woman's signal had been noticed he could not tell.

Nor could he know whether or not he had, in that moment of imprudence, been recognized as the hated detective who had already caused this woman so much trouble. No outward sign came from her and Westrom did not again risk even glancing into the mirror from the angle which commanded her face, for he had realized that in that position it was as easy for her to see him as for him to see her.

Musing over the question of whether or not the woman was aware of his substitution for the rightful driver, Westrom clipped off the miles, ever mindful of possible pursuit, tho the change in direction at Oceanside had put him a little at ease on that subject. Nevertheless, he continued to watch the road behind, thru the rear-sight mirror.

The vigilance was rewarded with a forewarning that something of sinister nature was bearing down upon them. It was a dilapidated looking car but a speedy one, evidently of proud ancestry. Not its careening speed, merely, but the fact that its driver was a Mexican and that with him rode a Chinaman, told Westrom that here was trouble. Yet with a screaching of exhaust whistle, the car curved around the slower machine and sped on.

The first effect of this sudden appearance and disappearance was an order from Mrs. Lovett, via the speaking tube.

"Stop at the next supply station, there is one about five miles beyond."

The little building, standing before a grove of eucalyptus trees, was easily identified. A calm, peaceful sight it presented, with neither person nor machine in sight, but it was in anything but a calm, peaceful frame of mind that

(Continued on Page 16.)

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Mera and Tommaso Try to Help Lannigan, But It Looks as If the Sheriff Will Win This Game.

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The Iron-Rider

BY FRANK L. PACKARD

Last Week's Installment in Brief.

But Larry beat off the train crew and, seizing the engine, passed thru several stations. Afterward he sought refuge at a lonely station in the private car of

MR. PELENOFF, a visiting Russian railway official. He was concealed in a stateroom by

MERA PELENOFF, Russian's daughter, who believed his story that he had killed a man in self-defense.

Mera Pelenoff sat with her back to the door while her father and

FELTON, the road superintendent, conversed about the crime. When she heard that not murder, but assault and robbery was the charge, she scornfully ordered him to be gone. Larry later overpowered the telegraph operator at the station, and learned by wire that Mason was not dead. As he was about to leap the next freight train he saw in one of the cars the face of Masseno, who was fleeing from arrest.

Larry at once boarded another car, and saw Masseno and his desperate crew, seven in number, leap off to attack Pelenoff's private car.

Larry followed the crew of Italians. There was a conflict, the Italians were routed, and Larry was wounded. Mera helped him escape on a hand-car, dressed his wound, and took a dangerous ride with him down the mountain. Then it was that Larry was at last cheered by the appearance of

BEN WILSON, an old friend.

In the meantime Mera and her father had a long discussion in which Pelenoff appeared to be disturbed, the effect this man had had on his daughter's life and views and in which Mera stood up for Larry with all her woman's fighting courage.

And while settled at Angel, where Ben Wilson later brought Larry, things came to a head, for Mera received a cryptic message requesting her to come to a certain spot on the track, and signed "The Man With the Buckboard."

(CHAPTER XIX. Continued.)

THE blood was pounding suddenly thru Mera's veins in a fierce, mad tide, her heart was beating wildly. "The Man with the Buckboard"—Ben Wilson! A thousand conflicting thoughts and questions seemed to surge upon her at the same time. Why was he here? Why had he come to Angel? What had happened? Was Larry worse? Was——

She hardly recognized her own voice speaking unconcernedly to Sam.

"Very well, Sam. Thank you. And I think you will do well to heed what that man told you about saying anything of this—to any one."

Sam, still visibly frightened, sought refuge in dignity.

"Dere ain't no power dat I ever heard ob dat could drag one word out ob me, missy—no, suh! I'se got too much respect foh de promise I made dat dere gentleman foh to do anything lak dat. I—I'se a man ob mah word, I is. Yassum!"

She dismissed Sam curtly. She could very readily understand. But as she stood there, mechanically tearing the letter into tiny shreds, her mind was busy with a much more pertinent problem—Sheriff Laing. For the first time Sheriff Laing now loomed up a threatening and disturbing factor. How close a surveillance had he kept upon her? The numerous and unexpected occasions on which she had encountered him would indicate that not many of her movements had escaped his notice. Was he, or one of his men, somewhere out there now?

The dark eyes grew hard and resolute. No one could follow her down the track without her knowing it—and there was Tommaso to help her. If she could do nothing more, she must warn Ben Wilson that she was watched and that any collusion between them, if discovered, would be bound to result in suspicion. Suspicion would lead to the discovery of his share in the affair, and from that, only too probably, to Larry's hiding place, and—the color ebbed slowly from her face. Was there any need of a hiding place any more? Had—had anything happened? A cold fear took possession of her. Larry was worse, or perhaps—perhaps—no, she would not let her mind frame the word. It was only a flesh wound, only a flesh wound, she asserted to herself with fierce insistence.

She walked quickly to the smoking-compartment at the rear, where Tommaso was waiting.

"Tommaso," she said rapidly, "I have just had news. I do not know whether it is good or bad. I am going down the track a little way to meet a man who helped Larry to get away."

He was beside her on the instant, face flushed eager.

"I can come, too?" he pleaded.

"Yes, you may come, too—at least part of the way," she answered; "and you can help me, Tommaso."

"How?" he demanded.

"Come along!" she replied. "You'll see!" And, leading the way out on to the observation platform, she stepped down on to the track.

They were practically at the easternmost end of the yards, a hundred feet from the car, where the last spur tied into the main line, when she spoke again.

"Pick up a pebble, Tommaso," she said quietly, "and see if you can hit that—oh, anything you like! And when you stoop, look behind you and see if we are followed."

The sharp little ferret face of the boy brightened.

"Sure—I know!" he said quickly

She sauntered on leisurely. Tommaso joined her again in a moment.

"Any one?" she asked.

"Only some of the men back there by those freight cars," he answered.

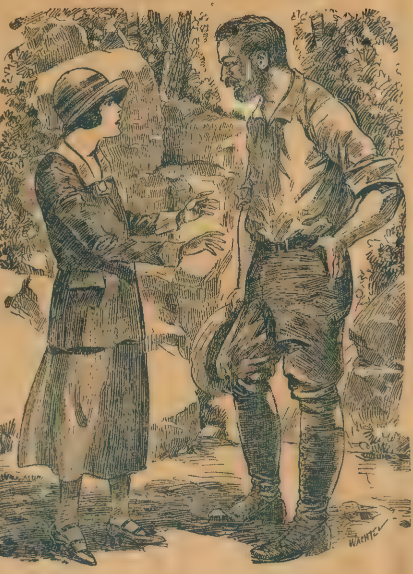
"Don't do it too often," she cautioned.

They went on. In the quarter mile to the curve of the track the ruse, tho repeated several times, brought no results. Tommaso had seen no one on the track.

"It's not very clever," she admitted, as they reached the butte and halted just far enough around the curve to be hidden from sight; "but it was the only thing I could think of. If any one is following, he will have seen thru it, I am afraid, and would wait until we were out of sight around this bend here. Tommaso, you crawl back just far enough so that you can see any one coming, and hide there. I've only just a few steps farther to go. You can come and warn me if you see anybody coming."

"All right," he agreed, and, dropping on his hands and knees, began to work his way back along the track-side.

She watched him for an instant; then turned and ran on along the track as it curved in almost a half circle around the obstructing butte.



She reached out her hands unconsciously to the rancher. She had dreaded so much, feared so much, that she was not sure she had heard aright.

A LOW call reached her, and she stopped suddenly. Ben Wilson stepped out on to the track a little way ahead of her. She had not been running fast, but now her breath came as tho from great exertion. Impulse urged her to hurry forward to the man with feverish eagerness—but that fear, that dread of what she might hear made her hesitate.

He waved his hand, and came toward her—the same great, burly, bearded giant of that moonlight night which seemed so many ages and ages ago. The same gruff, masterful voice boomed out.

"Right glad to see you, miss. You got my letter then all right. I did some calculatin' as to whether I'd hand that black-faced rascal of yours a five-dollar bill, or enrich him with the fear of God. I came to the conclusion that the last was cheaper—and safer."

She tried to smile—but she was searching his face for the answer to the question that alone was dominant in her mind.

"Larry?" she asked tensely. "Tell me! Is he—has anything happened?"

"You bet there has!" said the rancher, grinning. "There's a whole lot happened. I ain't takin' any credit for it, but I never saw a man get on his feet quicker. He's as good as ever he was."

She reached out her hands unconsciously to the rancher. She had dreaded so much, feared so much that she was not sure she had heard aright.

"You mean," she said, and she felt her lips quiver, "you mean that—that he is well again, and—and safe?"

"Why, sure!" he laughed—and then he stared at her a little awkwardly. "Say, what——"

"I was afraid," she said tremulously. "Your coming here—your letter. I—I didn't know what to think."

"That's so!" agreed Wilson. "I guess that's right. Must have been a bit of a shock. But I couldn't put nothin' like that into the letter."

"No," she said—and now lips and eyes were smiling. "No; of course, you couldn't! Oh, I'm so glad! Tell me about him—tell me where he is."

"Well," said the rancher, and a whimsical drawl crept into his voice, "I ain't sayin' this to everybody, but I don't mind tellin' you that he ain't in Bald Valley, and that he ain't so far away from this precise locality neither."

She turned swiftly, with a little gasp that mingled shy dismay, startled wonder and disturbed composure, and looked around her.

The rancher chuckled.

"No, he ain't exactly here," he said.

"Oh!" she murmured a little confusedly. It was curious that in her relief there should be a keen disappointment!

Wilson jerked his head in the direction of the town.

"I've got him back there in Angel."

"In Angel!" she echoed mechanically; then swiftly, anxiously: "But he should never have come back here! I—I don't quite understand. Surely both of you realized the danger! Why did you do it?"

The rancher screwed up his face into a wry grimace, and shrugged his shoulders helplessly.

"He would have it, that's all, the goldinged, cantankerous mule! Said if I didn't want to bring him, he'd get here if he had to crawl—and say, young woman, he would have, too!"

"Yes; but why?" she persisted. "What was his reason, what did he expect to gain by it?"

"H'm!"—the whimsical drawl was back again. "Well, I guess that's mostly up to you."

"To me?" She stared in surprise.

"Well, he said he wasn't goin' to let no woman fight this out alone for him without him sittin' in and drawin' to his own hand. But I kinder got a hunch that what was troublin' him a good deal was the possibility that this here little excursion of your dad's might be nipped ahead of schedule, and that you'd be hikin' back for Russia before"—the rancher's eyes twinkled humorously—"well, before you and him got a chance to do a little of this detective work together."

Mera was conscious of a sudden flush dyeing her cheeks, tho she tried to meet Wilson's quizzical gaze unconcernedly.

"You should never, never have let him run himself into danger like this!" she said, seeking sanctuary in grave disapproval.

"Mebbe not, mebbe not," admitted the rancher, with a grin; "but, anyway, there you are. And I forgot to mention another little idea he's got into his head. He's set on gettin' into that office where all this happened—wants to have a look around, he says."

"Into the office!" she repeated quickly. "What for? Has—has he discovered anything?"

"Nope! Not that I know of," returned the rancher. "More of a hunch than anything else, I guess. He got it kinder sudden while we was layin' up the next day at a friend's of mine about ten miles from nowhere, and he's had it ever since."

"But I thought you had taken him to your ranch!" she exclaimed.

WILSON shook his head.

"That's what the idea was when we started out," he said, "but we got chewin' it over, and changed our minds. We figured it wasn't safe; that by the time they'd run up the line to the next station and found nothin', they'd naturally come back to the place where they picked you up. They ain't such fools but what they'd have a kind of special interest in that road there—and that road leads into Bald Valley. Get the idea, don't you? Bald Valley didn't size up as a health resort to convalesce in. We turned around, came back past Passnock—there's a ford about a mile from the station—and about daylight hit my friend's place that we was headin' for. We laid up there two days while Larry got on his feet again, then last night we started for here, and made the thirty-five miles along about noontime."

"And now?" she asked.

"Ever walk out past the upper end of the town?"

"Yes—as far as the creek."

"Good! That makes it easy! Well, if you was to keep along, say, another quarter of a mile to the only house around there, I dunno but that's as far as you'd need to go." Then, tentatively: "Guess you could find the way, couldn't you? He wants to see you."

She did not answer for a moment; then earnestly, almost desperately:

"Oh, he should never have come at all! I—I don't know what to do! I hardly dare go anywhere. I'm watched. I've been watched ever since we returned to Angel. I'm not sure even that I haven't been followed here; tho, if I have, Tommaso—the little Italian boy that Larry saved at the camp, you know—will warn us."

"Who's watchin' you?" demanded Wilson, his face hardening suddenly.

"Sheriff Laing."

"How do you know?"

"I overheard him tell Mr. Felton in the car that that was what he intended to do, because he was sure I knew where Larry was."

"The blazes he did!" The big rancher scowled fiercely. "Well, he hasn't followed you here, anyway, that's sure. I saw him uptown just before I started."

"But did he see you?" she countered anxiously.

"I dunno! 'Twouldn't make much difference if he did."

"No-o, I suppose that's so," she assented slowly. "But—but I don't like it. I—I'm afraid. You must be very careful. Don't let Larry move out of that house until I have found some way of communicating with him. He cannot stay here in Angel—he must not stay here. He's certain to be caught. Are you sure you can trust the people in that house?"

Wilson smiled grimly.

"Seein' it's my brother's, I guess I can."

"But he mustn't stay here in Angel!" she cried. "You can see that now, can't you? And it would just give everything away if you and I were seen together. Are you perfectly sure, are you certain, that no one saw you coming here?"

The rancher was grave now, alert, serious.

"Yes; I'm certain," he replied. "I made a detour of the town to get here."

"I hope you are right," she said fearfully. "In any case, go back the same way. And I think you had better go at once. It will be just as well if I am not too long away."

She held out her hand. "I'll find some means of communicating with Larry—tonight, if possible—some plan to get him safely away."

"I could get him away—if he'd go," growled Wilson. "But I don't figure he will—he was too much set on gettin' here."

"He must!" she asserted—and then her face flushed again. "You tell him I—I say so."

"I'll tell him," said the rancher.

"And—and don't let him stir out until he—he hears from me tonight," she said.

The humorous twinkle crept back into the rancher's eyes.

"I reckon I can promise that," he declared.

She scarcely heard him. Her mind seemed to be in riot. Intuitive fear of danger, other even than that which she could so plainly see, beset her. Every minute that she lingered here with the rancher aggravated it. The chance that they might be seen together brought terror.

"Good-by—until tonight," she said—and held out her hand again. "And, oh, be careful on your way back!"

"Don't you worry," he answered confidently. "Good-by."

She hurried around the bend of the track, where Tommaso rose to meet her.

"There wasn't anybody," he said.

She caught the boy's arm.

"Tommaso"—she tried to speak calmly—"Larry is here in Angel."

"Here!" The boy's face glowed with sudden delight—and as suddenly clouded. "They ain't caught him, have they?"

"No," she said.

"Where is he, then? Can we go and see him?"

"Not now. We'll try tonight."

"But——"

She shook her head.

"Don't ask questions now, Tommaso. I—I don't know myself what it is best to do. We've—we've got to remember Sheriff Laing, you know. You go back to your boarding house now, and get your supper. And you mustn't come back here to the car—be on the station platform at half-past 8. Don't try to hide there if you have to wait; that would only arouse suspicion—tho there's hardly likely to be anybody about at that hour to pay any attention to you. Do you understand, Tommaso?"

Tommaso nodded.

And a few minutes later Mera entered the private car alone.

CHAPTER XX.

THE RENDEZVOUS.

MERA had tried very hard, as the meal progressed, to disguise the anxiety and nervous excitement under which she was laboring; but she realized that she had been only partially successful. Several times she had caught her father's glance upon her full of a perplexed solicitude; and once, prefacing his suggestion with some playful remark about having been so inconsiderate as to consign her to a dull evening alone, he had offered to renounce his intention of spending an hour or two with Manley, the superintendent, at the latter's house as he had promised, and to remain with her in the car instead. She had protested against this vehemently; so vehemently, in fact, that, while her father had hastily fallen in with her wishes, she saw that his uneasiness was but increased.

And now, as he poured his cognac into his after-dinner coffee, lighted a cigarette and leaned back in his chair, he was regarding her with grave disquietude.

"Mera, my dear," he said affectionately, "I am very much afraid that this unfortunate affair is proving altogether too much worry for you. You are tired, you are worrying, and this dreary outlook on nothing but railroad yards for three days on end is not doing you any good, either."

"I'm not a bit tired, father—really," she answered.

"Well, then, a little despondent perhaps," he amended. "I think you should have a change."

"A change?"—there was a quick, frightened note in her voice.

Mr. Pelenoff toyed musingly for a moment with his cigarette, scraping off the ash on the edge of the Limoges saucer.

"We must look at this matter very seriously, Mera—and rationally," he said finally. "Frankly, I do not see that there is anything that can be accomplished here. Personally, I feel that I have exhausted every source of information. I am not insensible to the debt I owe Lannigan, nor, apart from this affair, to his many obviously admirable characteristics, his fearlessness, his professional ability of which I must admit every one speaks highly; and as long as I could see any hope of success I tried to help you clear him of this crime."

"You have been splendid, father"—she leaned across the table and laid her hand over her father's. "But——" she paused.

"But he has not yet been cleared?" Mr. Pelenoff supplied. "That is what you mean, Mera?"

"Yes," she said, in a low voice.

It was a moment before Mr. Pelenoff spoke again; then, with a quietness that rather enhanced than robbed the question of its directness and force:

"Mera, why do you believe this man is innocent?"

She searched her mind for a reply. It was the same question, only in different words, that she had asked herself so many times—and had turned from, refusing to answer, telling her soul: "Not yet! Not yet! Why do you ask that now—why do you ask it? Not yet! Not yet!" She met her father's eyes.

"I know he is innocent," she said.

Mr. Pelenoff sighed.

"Mera," he said gently, "I have always known that I could not take your mother's place with you, tho I have tried to do so. If she were alive she could talk to you now so much better than I can do, and you would understand each other so well. As it is, perhaps I can only see things from a practical standpoint. I began at the bottom and worked up. I say this so that you will understand that I have nothing of difference of station in mind. I will go even further. Lannigan is a brave man. He did a more splendid and a bigger thing that night in risking his liberty than he did in risking his life. He is the kind of a man who would prompt me thru selfish motive to offer a career with me in my own work. Can I say more, Mera? But there is this other thing—and I fear that there is more in your heart than just gratitude for what you owe him. I do not wish to wound or hurt you, you are all I have in life, and your happiness is more to me than anything else; but would it not be wiser, easier, to face the issue now once for all, to realize the futility of such feelings if you have them, and put them from you bravely before they come to exercise an influence that will sadden all your life?"

Her eyes were wet as she shook her head.

"That is what mother would have said," she whispered, pressing his hand. "But, dad, you and I are not looking at it from the same viewpoint. Putting aside all personal feelings, don't you see that, believing him innocent, I cannot give up my efforts to prove him so? If one man is innocent, there must exist a guilty one. And until that guilty man is found, or at least until the other has been cleared, one cannot say that all means have been exhausted, because somewhere, of necessity, there does and must exist the proof of innocence."

"But if you never find it?" ventured Mr. Pelenoff seriously. "For, granting its existence, that is quite another matter, Mera."

"But I will!" she asserted bravely.

Mr. Pelenoff, agitated and distressed, lighted another cigarette. He poked for an instant with the burnt match at the ashes in the saucer before he spoke.

"Well, in any case"—he infused a lightness into his voice—"I've a suggestion to make. As I said, a little

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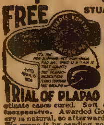

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change will do you good. I propose that we take a run back East."

"Leave Angel!" she cried.

"For a day or two—yes."

"But—but would you come back?" hesitatingly.

"Of course!" smilingly. "I have still to complete my trip of inspection thru the mountains."

HER mind was working quickly now. To leave Angel for a few days? Why not! Why would it not be just the very thing to do! She would persuade Larry to let Ben Wilson take him away again tonight; and going away herself would relieve her of the watch that Sheriff Laing had placed upon her, and perhaps besides might even have the effect of convincing the sheriff that after all her connection with the case had ended that night on the track. This would leave her free on her return. Yes, decidedly, she would go!

"Very well," she said. "When shall we start?"

"Why, I think in the morning." He patted her hand approvingly. "I'll see if I can't persuade Manley to come along and bring his wife. We'll have a jolly little party. Would you like that?"

"Yes; ask them, by all means," she agreed. "I like Mrs. Manley very much. I'll have the stateroom that Mr. Felton occupied made ready for them."

Mr. Pelenoff pulled out his watch.

"Eight o'clock!" he exclaimed. "I'd better be going." He got up from his chair, and, coming around the table, kissed her on the cheek. "I am sure we have decided on just the thing!" he said. "Good-night, dear. You'll hardly be up when I return?"

"I don't know, dad. I can tell you better then," and she smiled. "It depends on how late you are."

"I sha'n't be late," he said. "Good-night."

"Good-night," she responded—and a moment later heard him leave the car.

She remained for a little while motionless; and then, with a quick gesture, she rose and rang for Sam to clear the table.

"I am going to my stateroom, Sam," she said briefly, "and I do not wish to be disturbed."

She passed down the corridor, entered her stateroom, and sat down on the couch. There was still half an hour before she was to meet Tommaso. She must try to think calmly now, tho her conversation with her father kept obtruding itself upon her. Sam, first of all, must not see her leave the car. She had to foresee, tho, that Sheriff Laing, watching, might see her. But that was why she had chosen to meet Tommoso on the lighted platform. It must not be guesswork, she must know whether Sheriff Laing or any one else was watching her tonight. In the darkness of the railroad yards his task would be easy; but the lighted platform presented a barrier that would at least keep him at sufficient distance to allow her to work out the plan she had formed.

Mera looked at her wrist-watch impatiently. It was still too early—but why wait? Tommaso, in his boyish eagerness, would certainly be there long ahead of time—was probably there now. Yes, she would go at once. She picked up a cloak, threw it around her shoulders, and, stealing to the stateroom door, opened it softly, and looked out. Sam was still busy in the dining compartment. Cautiously she closed her door behind her, and tiptoed along the corridor to the platform door of the car. Here she slipped back the catch of the spring lock so that she could re-enter without being obliged to ring, for the doors at night when the car was in the yards were always kept locked—and stepped down onto the track-side.

Her heart began to beat a little faster now in spite of herself, tho she forced herself to walk along leisurely, nonchalantly. It was dark about her; there was only the distant twinkle of the many-colored switch-lights up and down the yards. She found herself striving to catch the sound of a footstep behind her—but there was only the rumble of cars and the snort of the little switching-engine's exhaust, from where the yard crew were at work on a spur over near the shops.

She felt an almost uncontrollable desire to look behind her, just as she felt an equally insistent impulse to run—and, suddenly, the risk that she was inviting filled her with momentary panic. It was different, sitting there in the car and planning it out—very different from doing it! She seemed all at once very weak, very impotent, very much alone, as tho crushed down by the weight of overwhelming odds; a posse scoured the mountains for Larry, here in Angel the sheriff watched; every one was pitted against her to prevent her, in one way or another, from doing what she was striving to do now—save the man who once had saved her.

It passed, all this, and as she reached the station platform she was calm and resolute once more. Tommaso, as she had suspected, was already there. The boy joined her, and they began to walk slowly up and down in front of the station, while she rapidly explained to him what she purposed.

"And now talk, Tommaso!" she ended. "Talk about something—anything. We mustn't act like conspirators!"

He caught her meaning, and began to chatter volubly.

There was no one in sight. The platform was absolutely deserted; and the station, too, for the time being, appeared devoid of life, tho the door that led to the offices upstairs was open, and she knew, of course, that the despatcher at least was there. Several times they paced up and down; and then finally she pressed Tommaso's arm meaningly, as they turned at the lower end of the building.

"When we go back this time!" she said in a low voice. "You understand, Tommaso?"

"Yes," he answered excitedly. "Do you think there's been any one following us—really?"

"I don't know," she replied; "and we must know. That is what——"

She caught her breath sharply. A quick step sounded from just around the corner of the station wall behind her, and then another—and then a voice that, as she recognized it, seemed to make her heart stand still.

"Hey, there, Felton! I've been looking for you for hours!"

It was Sheriff Laing.

She felt Tommaso grip her hand: felt her own tremble as it closed convulsively over the boy's. But how clear her mind was now, as tho danger were acting like a stimulant upon her brain! The sheriff had not been following her; he had come from the direction of the town. She was free of him, free from any spying upon her for the rest of that night if only he did not see her there now! But he would be around the corner of the building before she could arrive at and disappear around the other end, for she was only half-way along, just opposite the open doorway that led upstairs to the offices and—

"Quick!" she whispered—and drew Tommaso inside the doorway.

THE steps drew nearer. She heard the murmur of voices, but could not distinguish the words. She whispered again to Tommaso. There was a narrow, passagelike space flanking the stairway, and they retreated back along this and crouched in the darkness. Felton undoubtedly was coming to the office, but he would not be able to see them now even when he went upstairs.

The forms of the two men loomed up suddenly in the doorway. Felton, on the point of entering, paused tentatively.

"It wasn't much of a spill, only a couple of freight cars, but I've been down there all afternoon. The worst of it is that it has put me behind in this payroll job I've shouldered. But if it's anything special, Laing, come up to the office and I'll give you half an hour."

There was a gruff, short laugh from the sheriff.

"No, I'm not going up—and neither are you. I've got something a blamed sight more important for you to do."

"Eh?" demanded Felton in surprise.

"That's what I said," returned the sheriff. His voice dropped lower. "Lannigan's in Angel."

It seemed to Mera as tho some icy, frigid thing had clutched suddenly at her heart. It couldn't be true, it couldn't be true—that he knew! It was not the sheriff who had spoken, it was a horde of demons in horrible jubilee who were

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shrieking those words in her ears: "Lannigan's in Angel. Lannigan's in Angel. Lannigan's in Angel." Fear, cold and deadly, gripped her. She seemed stunned, and yet was conscious of some abysmal calamity. And then Tommaso stirred, and she held him fiercely with both her hands to keep him still. Felton's ejaculation, gasped out of a long, palpitating silence, came to her as from miles away.

"What!"

She steeled herself to calmness She must hear, and above all she must understand everything that was said.

"You 'got it,' all right," said the sheriff with vicious complacence. "Regular iron-rider, wasn't he? Some of the boys have been giving me the grin the last day or so. Well, he handed out a chase—I'll give him credit for that—but I guess I'll do the grinning from now on."

"Where did you catch him?" Felton questioned quickly.

"Nowhere. I ain't even seen him yet."

"Then what do you mean? How do you know he's here, if you haven't seen him?" asked Felton in a bewildered way.

"Because," replied the sheriff, "two and two makes four. Savvy? I saw Ben Wilson on the street this afternoon."

"Ben Wilson?"—Mera could see Felton shake his head. "Who's Ben Wilson?"

"A rancher from Bald Valley—where that road led to. You remember where we picked up that girl?"

"Yes, of course!" Felton nodded impatiently. "Go on!"

"Well, my fellows out there haven't been hanging around doing nothing for three days. It kind of looked like that road from the first, and some of the boys went down there to Bald Valley the next day, but they didn't find anything. Meanwhile, the rest of 'em went over the right-of-way with a fine-tooth comb looking for that handcar—but they didn't find that, either. That road kept looking more and more as tho it was the way Lannigan made his escape—only where was the handcar? Get me? And then Parsons began nosing into the creek on an off chance, and there, it was, by G—d! That settled it! Lannigan had made his getaway at that spot. That was yesterday, you understand? Now that road runs up from Bald Valley and forks at Passnock, one fork running east to here and the other across the railroad and diagonally back again in thru the mountains to Thunder Mountain. It was pretty near a cinch that whoever had helped Lannigan had a horse, for Lannigan was wounded; and that put it up to some one from Bald Valley, for there wasn't any one else owning a horse within miles, and nobody else but a Bald Valley man would have been likely to have been on that section of the road at that time of night. Parsons didn't find Lannigan, but he found that Ben Wilson had been away from his ranch for five days, and was supposed to be in Thunder Mountain. I got that report from Parsons last night, and I wired Thunder Mountain. The reply I got kind of opened the jackpot up wide. Wilson left Thunder Mountain to drive back home about noon on the day of the crime, and that would have brought him along that bit of road just about the right time to make himself useful to Lannigan. Get it?"

"Yes, it's up to Wilson, I guess," agreed Felton.

"Yes, I guess it is!" snorted the sheriff. "And what's more, he drove in here with Lannigan early this afternoon. Wilson's got a brother up the road a bit—you know him—and they've got Lannigan stowed away there."

THE air was stifling to Mera. She wanted to scream out; she wanted to run madly from the place—and that icy clutch at her heart seemed to be taking even her physical strength away, making her limbs tremble and grow weak. She raised her hands, tightly clenched, and pressed them against her forehead. She must listen, she must force herself to listen.

"But are you sure?"—doubt struggled with suppressed eagerness in Felton's voice. "If you haven't actually seen Lannigan——"

"But I've seen enough else, haven't I!" retorted the sheriff bluntly. "I've seen Wilson here. I started things moving quietly the moment I clapped eyes on him. I found out that he drove in with another man that he took to his brother's house. I know that it's Wilson who is playing in with Lannigan. What more do you want?"

"Nothing," admitted Felton, "if there were any reason for Lannigan being here. But to come back to Angel of all places! That's not likely, is it? The man would be a fool to do that."

"Would he!" Laing laughed shortly. "No; I guess not! It was about the best play he had to make—not being able to see my hand."

"But why—what for?" Felton demanded.

"The girl, of course!" replied the sheriff shortly. "What do you suppose I've been watching her for? I'll admit I didn't expect to have it thrown at me as easy as this; but I did expect, and I told you so that night, that they'd try and communicate with each other. She's the best he's got—that's what he's here for! They probably fixed it up between them that night that she was to come back here and that she'd find some way of helping him—and that's why nothing came my way thru watching her. She didn't make any move to communicate with him because it was all arranged beforehand. And look here, Felton"—his voice grew suddenly raucous—"I don't give a d—n who her father is; just as soon as I've got my bird behind the bars of his cage, my cards are going down on the table face up, every last one of them, and I'll make her sweat for this! I'll show her what it means to try her tricks on the law! I'll show her whether she can sit in that car and swizzle tea with an air out of that d—d charcoal pot, while she laughs at me and twenty men out there in the mountains—I'll fix her!"

There was a cold, brutal finality in the words that made her shiver.

Felton was speaking again.

"Well, if you know he's there, why haven't you gone up and got him? You said he came in this afternoon."

"And lose two or three men doing it!" growled the sheriff ironically. "There wasn't any hurry about it. He didn't come all the way down here to run away again the next minute, did he? That house is in the open, and you can bet they'd keep a pretty sharp outlook this afternoon. They'd see us coming, and Lannigan would fight like a wildcat if we attempted to rush it by daylight. That would have been a d—n fool play. I ain't keen on throwing any of the men's lives away when it ain't necessary. I didn't even try to follow Wilson around. You get it, don't you? With everything quiet this afternoon, Lannigan'll be lulled into security. We're going up there now, but with the boys still way in the mountains I'm short of men that I can trust. I've got three more besides you and me, and that'll be just about right. We'll surround the house and have the door down and the irons on Lannigan before he can bat an eyelash."

"All right," said Felton. "I'll go, of course, if you want me to. I guess you're right; he'd have got one or two of you at least this afternoon if you——"

The doorway was empty. The voices died away in an indistinct murmur—the receding footsteps echoed back from along the platform.

For an instant, her mind in a sort of torpor, stunned with the dazed consciousness of impending disaster, Mera stood there as rigid as tho turned to stone—and then she felt for Tommaso's hand, and the two together stole outside the station. Neither spoke. Tommaso's shoulder, as it touched her, shook with a dry sob. Felton and the sheriff had gone. She drew the boy closer to her, and walked mechanically toward the upper end of the platform. She was trying to think, trying to force calmness upon herself. The distance was very little greater thru the fields than by the main street, tho it would be a far more difficult way to go in the dark; but, to offset that, the sheriff would have no reason, not the reason that she had, for hurrying as she would hurry, and she still might get there first. Yes—yes, that was what she had to do! She glanced about her to assure herself that she was not observed—and then led Tommaso quickly thru between the baggage-shed and the end of the station, and jumped from the platform to the ground on the other side.

The fields, with their small, hummocky buttes, that looked like little black knobs rising in the darkness, were before her. She broke into a run, Tommaso beside her. There was no need to explain anything—there was nothing to explain. He understood as well as she—that they were running a race with Sheriff Laing for Larry's life!

Part IX. appears next week, and the following week ends this thoroly fascinating story by the man who wrote the now world-famous and much-filmed story, "The Miracle Man."

* * *

Not Alone.

The lecturer had been describing some of the sights he had seen abroad. "There are some spectacles," he said, "that one never forgets."

"I wish you would tell me where I can get a pair!" exclaimed an old lady in the audience. "I am always forgetting mine."

* * *

The Cat Came Back.

"EVER try to lose a cat, old man?"

"Yes, once. And I hit upon a plan that I thought was sure fire, I wrote a note inclosing ten dollars and tied it to the cat's neck. The note read: 'Finder may keep both the cat and the money.'"

"And how did it work?"

"The cat returned the following day with another note tied to its neck. The note read: 'Don't need the cat, but can use the money. Please send ten dollars more.'"

* * *

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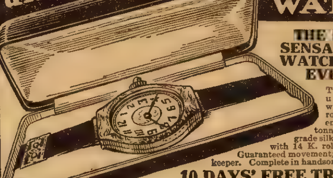

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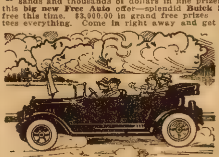

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Fifty Tin Cans

(Continued From Page 11.)

Westrom brought the unwieldly limousine to a stop.

"I will get out a minute," Mrs. Lovett announced. She already had the door open and stepped down to the ground with an agility hardly to be expected of one of her years. "Shut off the engine, we will remain a few minutes."

"I'll pull over in the shade."

It was a natural thing to do but Mrs. Lovett watched the crawling vehicle like a hawk as it moved a little forward and to the right of the road. With no indication of treachery the driver let it slide a little beyond the supply shed. His move brought into view the flying auto which had passed a little before. It was drawn up at the side of the building, and had been previously out of sight. The Mexican still sat ready at the wheel, a Chinaman stood on the ground beside it.

Still guiding his slowly moving machine with one hand, Westrom loosened the right from the wheel to flash a pistol and shoot twice, quick as human impulse could pull the trigger. His marks were not the two men but the front tires of their machine and two reports infinitely louder than those of his revolver told that the shots had gone home.

The big car was sent into all the speed it possessed and tho that was not great, it was enough that several shots which, accompanied by cries of rage followed it, were as ineffectual as the curses. One of them shattered the rear window of the tonneau, as the driver knew by the crash of breaking glass, but must have gone on thru the roof, since it did not damage the partition glass immediately behind his back.

Westrom continued his course possibly five miles until a sudden turn and, just beyond it, a little traveled dirt road leading off the main highway, but only pursued the rough road a few hundred yards, around another turn and, regardless of the car's welfare, drove it up into a eucalyptus grove. Back to the main highway he hurried on foot to erase, with beats from the broken branch of a tree, the telltale marks of his tires.

Then the man returned leisurely to the limousine, opened the door of the tonneau, carefully cleaned the seat of broken glass and with the big blade of his knife began a careful investigation of the fifty cans of New Orleans molasses which confronted him.

XVI.

"YES, Marshal Coleman is in, but he is holding an important conference. Who wishes to see him?" The clerk was as officious as it sometimes delights his kind to be.

"Mr. Westrom."

"As soon as he gets thru I'll tell him."

"Please break into his conference; if it happens to concern Mrs. Lovett, he will be expecting me."

Still outwardly suspicious, the clerk disappeared into an inner room, only to return an instant later with an effusive, "Step right in, Mr. Westrom."

In the room were the marshal, his chief detective, Moody, and, much to the arrival's surprise, Kathleen O'Brien.

"Ah, we're all here but Irving and the charming Aline," Westrom exclaimed.

"Where did you leave the old lady?" Coleman demanded irritably.

"With two of her pals, a Mexican and a Chinaman, about seventy-five miles south. You ought to find them somewhere on the beautiful San Diego County landscape." Westrom availed himself of a chair as he answered.

"We won't tho. She's across the line, got over this morning with those two, after a running fight with officers," Coleman responded gloomily.

"Did you expect me to catch the whole gang?" Westrom demanded, displaying annoyance at what he seemed to consider an implied criticism on the part of the marshal.

"No. You did right well spilling the beans for her as far as you did. I'm only regretting we couldn't have got wise to her a little sooner so's to have smoked out her entire gang. Perhaps, tho, those two that got away with her, are the last of them."

"Why despair? Haven't you still Spiers and Miss Curtin and my charming friend, Miss O'Brien?"

To Westrom's wonder the girl, for the first time in their acquaintance, gave him a friendly smile at his rather mocking words.

"Didn't the county hold Spiers?" Westrom went on, not venturing to pause to wonder over this sudden change in her attitude.

"No, the county didn't. We did," Coleman rejoined.

"But wasn't he held for poisoning the chauffeur, Goldberg?"

"You heard Miss O'Brien's testimony at the inquest," there was a deference in the marshal's manner as he nodded toward the girl, which had been lacking the previous day. "She saw the Chink hide the poison in Spiers' room. Moreover, we found the food in which this Thomas got his death dose. Seems he was in the habit of swiping sandwiches, which the cook made for the old lady's midnight suppers, out of the ice box and Hop Goon set a trap for him. They hated each other."

"I wonder why?"

"We wonder, too. It's one of the few wonders we've got left."

"But what are you holding Spiers for, then?"

"Blackmail. He knew Mrs. Lovett was an opium smuggler and was holding her up for tremendous sums. Probably, we can't prosecute him now that she is gone but we can get a dozen other backmail schemes out of him."

"And Aline? Blackmail, too?"

"No. Pure moocher. Just getting a fat living off flattery. Miss O'Brien does not think the old girl was fooled tho; thinks she kept this Miss Curtin around to keep Spiers good natured."

"Has Miss O'Brien turned State's evidence?" the puzzled Westrom demanded.

"She was State's evidence all along. Miss O'Brien of the customs service, may I present Mr. Westrom of the customs service?"

Westrom made a deep bow, enlightenment showing in his face.

"Now I tumble to many things," he said. "But why did you help Hop Goon hide those cans of opium?"

"Because, having ingratiated myself with Mrs. Lovett and Hop Goon and Thomas, I had to do anything required."

"And how did I happen to find opium in one of those cans when there was none in any other? Or even in that one?" Westrom added, unconscious of the Irishism.

"That would be a deep one," Moody made his first contribution to the conversation, "if we hadn't found another bunch of cans in the basement, with the reaf stuff inside, cooked to a finish."

Miss O'Brien made her second contribution to this verbal post-mortem; "Mrs. Lowett must have made the substitution herself," the girl said.

"But, why should she have taken all that pains to put those cans of opium on that shelf?" This time it was the marshal himself who assumed the role of interrogator.

"If I may elaborate my opinion, I think you gentlemen will find it a plausible one," Kathleen said. "Mrs. Lovett undeniably was an opium smuggler, in league with a Chinese gang. Thomas Goldberg, her chauffeur, was her assistant. But there was trouble with the Chinese, quarrels among themselves in which Mrs. Lovett must have become involved. A representative of one faction tried to kill her. Thomas killed him, instead.

"But then Thomas was frightened for his own life. He insisted on a rush away from the scene of the crime. Mrs. Lovett did not want to lose a profitable transaction but yielded to her chauffeur because she feared him. She tried to kill two birds with one stone; started west to satisfy Thomas, but got into communication with her Chinese friends and had that Hop Goon join her car at Kansas City, probably as preliminary emissary for the deals she has been carrying on out here.

"Thomas was wild about it because, not knowing that Mrs. Lovett was working an opium deal, he thought Hop Goon was but a representative of some tong, sent to get revenge for the killing in New York.

"Hop Goon, I believe, was merely annoyed at the hate which Thomas showed for him and used poison on the chauffeur as a simple little annoyance remover. But Thomas was expecting just such a thing and when he felt it coming on, revenge was his first thought, even overcoming the instinct of self-preservation. He managed to slay Hop Goon before he died, himself.

"Mrs. Lovett, Thomas and myself used to drive about the country, always meeting a Mexican in such a car as Mr. Westrom has described and getting from him a few cans of opium, which we would put in the tool box. Thomas did not know, I guess, that Chinese were back of this Mexican. You see, I was in the good grace of both mistress and chauffeur and knew at least all the outward aspects of their system. I even knew all her pretended hallucinations were but subterfuges, practiced, I believe, in the fear that she might need them some day as a defense in a court of law. We never met the Mexican twice in the same place. Finally we had accumulated fifty cans, all similar in size and label to those you opened here. Even I did not know she had the substitute cans.

"Mr. Westrom has asked why Mrs. Lovett had those cans hidden on the pantry shelf. She was constantly fearing treachery, and she was thoroly convinced Westrom was a detective. Being suspected, it was like her to court the bold expedient of being arrested and vindicated. So she set a trap to coax Westrom away from the house and then bring him back at a time when the opium was being hidden, for that motorcycle was fixed to break down. By herself, she must afterwards have changed cans, substituting those containing molasses, which we opened. The setting fire to her house is explained by the arrest of the Chinaman who did it—out of revenge for Hop Goon."

"By George, you've made the mud transparent," Coleman exclaimed in admiration. "I couldn't dope this thing out at all, but you seem to have explained it."

"All but one thing," the girl corrected. "I do not know yet why Mrs. Lovett was so afraid of Thomas. They had high words several times and I believe she was positively relieved when she learned he was dead."

"I believe I can explain that, but to do so I must upset a little of Miss O'Brien's theory."

Westrom, as he spoke, thrust his hand into a pocket and carelessly, as if he were bringing forth so many marbles, laid on the table before the astonished

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group several dozen beautiful diamonds, ranging in size from a carat upwards.

"There is the reason she was so afraid of Thomas," he said slowly. "Out of those fifty tin cans more than a dozen had false bottoms, underneath the molasses. These gems were in the false bottoms. Mrs. Lovett may have been an opium smuggler, but that was merely a side issue. Moreover, some of those cans did have opium in them, once. Almost without exception in those with false bottoms I found opium tinfoil stuck to the sides and bottom, showing the drug had been hastily removed. The opium and the gems came in together, smuggled. Thomas knew about it—I distinctly heard the mention of diamonds the first night I was in her house, when she quarreled with him in her library. That is why she was afraid of him."

"It is—certainly must be," Kathleen exclaimed, admiration in her voice. "She and Thomas had the secret of the gems between them, and some one, who will always be unknown, some one on the other side of the line. Mrs. Lovett and Thomas were putting over a smuggling game within a smuggling game. Running gems in with opium and not letting the runners know it was anything but opium."

Flushing a little at the enthusiasm of her comment, Westrom modestly turned the subject by asking:

"Where did you say you found those other cans?"

"In the basement, in the ruins."

"But they might have fallen from any one of the three stories above. What part of the ruins?"

Moody described the place with exactitude.

"That is right under where Irving Spiers had his room. What's the answer?" Westrom demanded.

"I have it," Kathleen cried out. "The second can did come from Spiers' room, fell thru into the basement in the fire."

"But the man has made a complete blackmail confession," objected Coleman. "Apparently he tells the truth and he absolutely denies having been mixed up in the smuggling himself; you agreed with that yourself, Miss O'Brien."

"He was telling the truth," Kathleen asserted. "But does it strike you that a woman as clever as Mrs. Lovett would have been an easy victim of Spiers' clumsy blackmail? She actually courted a raid on her house, that is plain. And she expected you to find that opium in Spiers' room, after you had fooled with the fake cans and let her have them back, with her precious gems inside. What better way to get back at Spiers for holding her up? She would herself stand cleared of the opium smuggling suspicions; the gem tranaction—which was more important—would have passed unnoticed, she would be free to handle the stones without constant fear that her steps were dogged. I am frank to confess I cannot help admiring that woman's brain."

Coleman arose decisively.

"Well, you appear to be so dead right there is no use wasting more talk over it. We've had information for months of many gem shipments to Mexico but never could locate any of the stones coming into this country. There they are, I reckon, on the table. We can send Spiers up for other blackmailing jobs, so we've at least got one of the gang. Two are dead. The old lady's safe across the border. Let's get back to routine."

As they walked out of the Federal Building together Westrom said to the never more radiant Kathleen,

"I may be a traitor to my profession, but I can't help being glad the old girl made her getaway."

"I knew that," the girl commented.

"How?" he demanded, astonished.

"Otherwise you would have turned around and driven her straight back here when you saw she was trying to get away. You don't fool me a bit, Mr. Westrom. You found those diamonds because you knew there was something mysterious about those fifty tin cans. But you could have looked into that just as well without putting the elderly person so close to escape. It has raised you a bit in my estimation. Because, you see, I was really quite in love with the 'old girl' myself, all the time I was trying to get the goods on her and I guess you were, too."

"She wasn't the only woman in that house I was in love with," Westrom responded, looking at her pointedly.

"Why don't you tell the other one about it, some time, Wolly?" she asked with tantalizing smile.

* * *

The Falling of a Leaf

(Continued From Page 2.)

eyes. He knew little of Abbott's world, or of the ages of women; but he knew this womon was one beloved by his friend, and therefore she was a creature divine. He leaned forward and touched the boy on the shoulder. Abbott looked around quickly, startled; then he smiled faintly and looked toward the golden summer sun.

"Sweetheart?" inquired the tramp

"Mother," answered the youth. "Infinitely better than any sweetheart, or anybody else. You'll agree with me there, of course."

"I don't know, Charley."

"You don't know!" surprisedly.

"I don't know nothin' about 'em. I never had none, Charley. But they must be somethin' elegant to have. Lots o' time I've wished I had one. I mightn't 'a' been a coward like I've always been; and I mightn't been the nothin' that I am. They sure love a feller, don't they, Charley?"

"They'd die for you, go to the end of the world for you, even suffer ages of torment for you!" Abbott went to his feet and faced the haggard Breamer. "They'd do anything for you! Oh, you've missed the most of life!"

"Is it fair?" breathed the tramp.

"Is what fair?" Abbott wanted to know.

"You've had one, and I didn't. I ain't wishin' you didn't have none, y' understand; I'm just askin' is it fair for one not to have any and another to have one. Is it?"

"I—I don't know," and Abbott shook his head.

"But I ain't goin' to question nothin'," muttered Breamer. "I've done squared myself with the future, and I want to keep square with it. Anyhow, I reckon it's better now that I ain't got one. If I had one, I'd have to die and leave her. Charley, you're sure, are you, that I've got forgiveness for not bein' anything at all in the world?"

"Lord, yes!" cried the boy; and he turned his saddened eyes toward the half of the sun that remained above the horizon.

"I'm glad to hear you say that, Charley. Because you're educated, and you know what you're talkin' about. It makes a difference. Don't it? It sure does. Say, Charley, I'm sorry for you. Because when you go you'll have to leave her. You never told me what was the matter with you. How long do you expect to live, Charley?"

Abbott turned his gaze downward. "I must ask your pardon, old man," he said deprecatingly. "I deceived you—rather, I allowed you to deceive yourself. I didn't come to the mountains for my health. I came here to keep out of the Georgia State penitentiary—the law wants me, and I'm in hiding! And I'm not guilty, either. But the circumstances would convict me if I were caught, and I can't risk being caught. I wouldn't mind it so much if I could get letters from home; but the authorities are watching the mails——"

He broke off abruptly. A glad light flitted across the tramp's face; he was glad the one friend of his life was not doomed to die as he was

"What was it you was accused o' doin'?" he inquired, looking toward young Abbott with idolatrous eyes

"Killing a man, that's all." He shrugged his slender shoulders. "It was like this:

"There was only my mother and me. Among the things my father left us there was a silver-mounted revolver, which we treasured much. One night a thief entered our home and carried away this revolver and a diamond ring and a purse with a little money in it.

"Now there was in my town, living not far from us—we lived in north Atlanta—a certain rich man whom I have always hated because he swindled my father out of a fine tract of cotton land when I was a child. The thief who stole the silver-mounted revolved, guided by a mean Fate, entered the house of the rich man on the same night, was surprised, killed the rich man and left the weapon lying beside him. I learned of it barely in time to get away. I knew I didn't dare to stay there and let the law catch me; I knew I couldn't risk standing trial with that evidence against me. And so I came here, and that is all."

"It's enough," muttered Breamer. "And so she don't know where you're at! And I'll bet you she's worried nearly to death about you. Charley, I think I'd better go down to Atlanta and tell her you're all right. Don't you think I had?"

The youth straightened, and his nether lip jerked a trifle.

"How I thank you for that!" he cried; and it sounded loud in the stillness of the everlasting hills. "But you couldn't. You're too weak, my good friend. You'd never make it. If I had money to pay your railroad fare—but I haven't—I'm pretty close to broke. After the interest in the thing has died down—next summer, perhaps—I can steal in home and see her."

"I believe I could make it," Breamer declared.

"No!" Abbott's eyes took in the tramp's thin figure, his hollow cheeks, his haggardness. "No! Tramps are beaten and cuffed, and it's a rather long journey to Atlanta. But I'm grateful to

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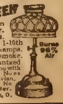

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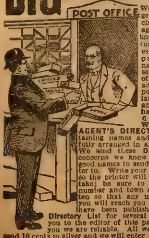

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you. I assure you I'm grateful to you."

The sun had entirely hidden itself. Breamer looked toward the lakes of shadows that were fast gathering in the coves below.

"It's getting late, Charley," he said. "It's a good half a mile to the top. Hadn't we better go?"

"Yes, we'd better go."

TOGETHER they went to the summit. An hour later the full moon came up. When it had almost reached its zenith the tramp rose from his bed of poles and stole to the doorway of the hut. He could hear Charley Abbott's deep breathing, and he knew the lad was sound asleep. Breamer went soundlessly to the shelter of green branches, and there stood looking down upon the saddened boyish face. Beside Abbott lay the picture of his mother; Breamer stooped and took it up with both hands. In the light of the moon the two faces seemed much alike, somehow. Again Breamer's fine, hollow blue eyes shone with the light of idolatry. A moment later he thrust the photograph inside the shirt Charley had given him, went back to the hut for his hat and the cane he had come to use; then he made his way toward the foot of the mountain men call Clingman's Peak.

He was going to Atlanta. He could find her by the picture—he could be sure that way. He was going to tell her that Charley was all right. What did it matter if he shortened his days by this extremely hard undertaking? His going was no more than the falling of a leaf. Charley had said that he was square with the hereafter, and Charley knew! He felt good in his heart.

Breamer was twenty days on the journey to Atlanta. Trainmen seemed more watchful and more opposed to accommodating tramps than ever. All the cunning that used to win him long rides now was futile. When he slipped from the side of a car loaded with machinery to the ground in the outskirts of Atlanta, he was so weak that he fainted. It was broad daylight when he came to. He crawled to a narrow ditch filled with muddy water and bathed his face and hands that he might appear a little more respectful to Charley's mother; then he moved slowly toward north Atlanta.

It proved to be a more difficult search than he had thought. She found him the next day at almost sundown. He had stopped against a gatepost of granite, and was peering up a gravel walk that led to a broad veranda beyond a setting of gnarled trees that hid the upper part of a fine old house. Things were dim; they swam before his eyes; he felt that he must fail, that he must die without accomplishing the one mission of his worthless life. He clutched the granite post with both hands and leaned his face against it. It was then that the little old gray woman came down and caught him by an arm.

He knew her instantly. "It's you'" he muttered hoarsely. "At last, it's you—and Charley's all right, ma'am! Yes, ma'am. He's up in Tennessee—hidin' on top of a big mountain—named Clingman's Peak. And he's—all right!"

"Thank God!" happily. "You're ill! Come—let me help you to the house; a doctor lives next door, and we'll call him in to see you."

She helped him to a comfortable chair on the veranda, and sent a servant for the doctor who lived next door.

And while they were waiting for the physician, Breamer told her, a few words at a time, of his life, of his illness, of his meeting with her son. The woman went pale as a full realization of what he had done broke upon her mind. She knew that he had shortened his little lease of life much; that he was very near to the iron door of death, where all men are equal, where the billionaire is a pauper. Impulsively, lovingly, gratefully, she bent and pressed her lips to his grimy forehead. Breamer's spirit fluttered up in response, and a joy too great to be understood filled his heart. What a reward it was! The one kiss he had ever known! Oh! if he could do something else for her—if he could give back her boy to her—if he would swear a lie with his dying breath he could do it! But that would destroy his peace with the hereafter!

Charley's mother took one of his hands and caressed it. There was a quick step on the gravel walk, and a moment later a tall, gray man appeared at his side.

"Too late, old sawbones—I'm all in," gasped Breamer. "Listen. A few months ago—I stole a pistol from this house—and killed a man—in another house! I—come—back to—confess. Hold up—my right hand—there! I swear it, so—help—me—God!"

Breamer's spirit went out to eternity a perjured soul for the sake of that which he had never had. A maple leaf as yellow as gold fluttered downward and lay still in Breamer's limp, open right hand; but neither the woman nor the doctor saw anything unusual in that; the leaves were always falling.

THE END.

Sibley Gets Even

(Continued From Page 4.)

"sale," but it took several days to advertise the auction. At last, however, the mule and the few poor farming utensils and house furnishings were sold; and Jake Sibley, with tense face and set lips, boarded the train for the North.

"Gawd help them two when Jake catches up with them!" said the postmaster, and again he voiced the common thought.

Evangeline's love never supported her in her search for Gabriel more ably than did Sibley's hate aid him in the pursuit of his runaway wife. And like Evangeline he often found the trail warm, but always the pair had just moved on. His progress from place to place was necessarily slow, because, his money soon giving out, he had to stop long enough in each town to earn the means to pay his way to the next. As the months slipped into years his hot anger settled down to a steady, sullen purpose that became more and more deadly.

IT WAS in the late fall of 1918, and the fourth year of his pursuit, that he came near to his prey. He had traced them to a small town in southwest Kansas. Arriving at this point he ate supper at the small hotel.

"Yes," said the landlord in answer to his inquiries, "there's a couple answering to that description come here last summer and moved onto the old Brown claim two or three miles north of here. What did you say the name was?"

Sibley had not mentioned any name. He knew that the fugitives had frequently changed their names when they had learned that he was on their trail. So he avoided the issue.

"The lady is my sister," he said, "but I plumb disremember the name of the feller she married. He was a stranger in our parts an' I wasn't home at the time."

"Well, the name they give was Jennings. They kind of kep' to themselves, and we haven't seen much of them. Southerners, I calculated they was by their talk."

"Oh, yeh," acquiesced Sibley, "that was the name, Jennings. I 'low to stay a right smart spell an' help sister out. Which way did you say their claim was, landlord?"

"It's about two and a half miles north of here. The main section line runs close by, and the road is tracked pretty plain, for there's not been any fresh snow for a week. The house is down in a draw to the right of the road. You can't miss it, tho, for there is a good sized cottonwood tree stands about a hundred yards from the shack, and it's the only tree for ten miles out. The house is a one room box frame in front, but there is a room back that runs into the bank of the draw. Dugouts, we call 'em."

IT WAS 7 o'clock when Jake Sibley took the road. He walked rapidly and soon covered the first two miles of the distance. Then he began to look about for the cottonwood tree.

A full moon rode the eastern heavens, and he seemed to be the center of a still white universe of snow whose level surface was unbroken save where it was pierced by a yucca's last summer's flower stalk. What stars were not outshone by the moon twinkled frostily, and the silence was awesome.

Suddenly the stillness was broken by a long, mournful howl, which seemed to come from some distance ahead. Sibley started as he recalled stories he had heard of wolves in sparsely settled sections, and he was relieved when he made out the cottonwood to the right of the road in front of him. Only the upper half of the tree was visible, so he knew it must stand in the ravine that the landlord had called the draw.

Again that weird howl came over the snow, but now he knew it for that of a dog, and he sensed that it came from the depression where the tree stood. He left the road by a faint track branching off to the right, and soon came to the edge of the draw.

The house lay at his feet. It was as the landlord had described it, backed up into the bank. A faint light shone from a side window.

Not far from the house a small lean-to thatched with straw stood against the bank, and in front of this a gaunt white hound sat on his haunches, his head turned up to the moon. Just then the dog gave two long, distinctly divided howls.

Sibley smiled grimly. "That's a shore sign that a man is goin' to die somewhere clost to here tonight!" he muttered.

The dog raised his lean head and howled again, but this time there were three divisions.

"Two times for a man, three times for a woman, the darkies allus said," thought Sibley. "Now how does the critter sense that I aim to kill both them varmints?"

He descended into the draw and cowed the dog into slinking inside the lean-to. Then he crept softly to the lighted window, pistol in hand, and peered in. There were no curtains at the window, and the ragged shade was up, so he saw clearly.

Within a coal-oil lamp was faintly burning on a table heaped with soiled dishes. There was no sign of fire in the dilapidated cook stove at the far side of the room. But his eyes centered on a bed not far from the window at which he stood.

On it lay a man and woman. The upper portion of the tumbled coverings had slipped aside, and showed that they were partly dressed. Both faces were worn and emaciated, but, despite the ravages of illness and starvation, Jake Sibley knew that his long search had ended. He had found Lige Brayton and Patty Belle as he had often pictured them, their heads on twin pillows; and for a long moment he saw red.

But what was this? From between the pillows rose the golden head of a little girl, a baby of about three years. Her small hands fumbled the woman's face. Then thru the stillness of the night came the child's fretful whimper.

"Mammy! Mammy!" it complained. "I'se so hungry!"

The woman seemed to rouse from a stupor She made a desperate attempt to rise to a sitting position, but fell weakly back on her pillow while a cry of helpless agony broke from her pallid lips.

"My baby! My pore little baby! Oh, Gawd, send help for her sake!" she wailed.

Jake hastily pocketed his pistol and stumbled blindly around the corner of the house to the front door and opened it. As he stepped inside the lamp gave a last despairing flicker and went out. The dread smell of influenza mingled with its dying fumes.

"Hello, the house!" Jake called.

"I dunno who you air, stranger," weakly responded the man, "but we-all air powerful glad you've come. I reckon we got the flu—that sneakin' kind where you're dead on yore feet afore you know you've got it a-tall. We ain't been able to walk sense last night."

Jake took a flashlight from his pocket, carefully keeping the glare from his own face.

"Got any coal oil?" he asked.

"I reckon they's a little in the can in the dugout, if you kin find it," hoarsely answered Patty Belle. "For Gawd's sake try to, so's you kin give the pore baby

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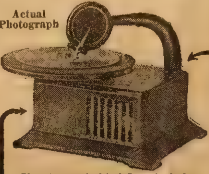

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some milk. They's a little in a crock in the dugout."

With the aid of his flashlight Jake found the oil can and filled the lamp. He lit the lamp and set it on the table. Then he turned to the bed.

The lamplight fell full on his face. The woman uttered a smothered cry. "Jake!" she moaned.

"Yes, it's Jake. But you don't have no called to get skeered, Patty Belle. I ain't around murderin' sick folks and starvin' babies!" he assured her.

He picked up the lamp and went into the dugout. There he found kindling and a meager supply of coal. With these he built a fire in the cracked cook stove, and set on it a crock of milk he had found in the dugout. The eyes of the sick man and woman followed his every movement, and the baby sat up in the bed and stared wonderingly, but no one spoke.

When the milk was warm Sibley went to the bedside and held out his arms to the child. The little creature had sensed the meaning of the preparations and went to him willingly. He sat down on an old rocker and fed her the milk and some bread he had found in the dugout. When her hunger was satisfied she looked up into his face with a confiding smile. Something pulled at the man's heart-strings, and he gathered her close to him. Presently the little head drooped to his shoulder, the blue eyes closed slowly, and she slept.

Jake wrapped his overcoat about her and laid her down on an old rug before the fire. Then he turned to the bed to ask if either of the sick folks could eat the remainder of the bread and milk.

A choking sound came from the man's throat. Sibley recognized the death rattle. Patty Belle struggled to her elbow.

"He's gone!" she gasped and fell heavily back. Jake hurried to the bed and put his ear down near Lige's heart and listened for several seconds.

"Yes, he's shore gone, Patty Belle," he said as he straightened himself. "An' may God have mercy on his soul!" he added solemnly.

"An' I am dying, too, Jake," the woman whispered feebly. "An' a woman don't die with no lie in her mouth, no diff'runce what she's been; an' as Gawd is my jedge, I loved you best, Jake! It weren't three months 'fore I begun wearyin' fer you, Jake, but it was too late then to go back. I uster hope the baby would favo you, Jake, an' she does! She shore does! You'll take care of the pore darlin'. She never did nobody no harm. Promise me, Jake!"

Her voice trailed off into a whisper, and as Jake's hand closed reassuringly over hers she died.

Too stunned and awed for tears Sibley closed both pair of staring eyes and reverently drew the soiled sheet over the pinched faces. Then he picked up the sleeping child and kissed the top of her golden head. Holding her tightly to his breast he wrapped the overcoat more closely about her, and went out into the night.

THE END.

A Model Husband

By Cran Crab

"AM I pretty good to you?" he asked. He was speaking to his bride of a few months as they sat opposite each other at a small round breakfast table. With a birdlike gesture she cocked her head coquetishly to one side eyeing him artfully before she replied:

"A model husband—almost."

Then his lovely wife was sipping her coffee daintily; he picked up his cup and swallowed the contents at one gulp. But now she was looking at him with that lovelight in her eyes, that lovely peach-blow upon her cheeks, and her soft mouth trembling towards a smile.

"You are an old dear, that's what you are. Her vibrant voice broke warmly into his drab meditations, "Won't you have another cup of coffee?"

He accepted.

"I'm a model husband—almost," he laughed.

"Almost," she said soberly. What was she leaving unsaid?

"Almost," he echoed waiting.

"Yes, but——" she toyed with her toast.

"What?" he cried eagerly.

"I believe a man ought to pay his wife a fixed wage or income."

The man's face and neck dyed an ugly red. He sat up stiffly.

"I suppose that is some more of that new-fangled bosh; some of that feminine spirit, woman freedom stuff. Blah! Don't you have enough money?"

"Yes, but——" Silence! Some things a wife can't tell her husband!

So began their first difference.

She had been a self-supporting woman before marriage. She had worked and received pay. And it was her own money—her very own—to spend as she pleased. Marriage deprived her of the privilege of earning money

Of course she had money. He gave her money, but— There was the meat bill, there was the grocery bill, there was the rent, the light bill, the telephone bill, the— When she dared use a small sum for a trifle for her own personal use she felt like a thief. She had no money of her own—her very own. Why the money he gave her was only house money.

Came a day when Inez needed money There was to be a church bazaar. She asked her husband for a small sum.

"What did you do with that last ten I gave you?" he demanded

Inez's eyes flashed but she was too proud to tell him that she had paid the butcher with it. She went into her room and shut the door. Next day she plead a headache and stayed home from the church bazaar

A week later found her holding a job as private secretary to Hanford of Hanford & White, inventors. A maid reigned superb in the Crasen household

"What's ailing Arthur Crason? Business? See his wife is working again," asked a curious gossip.

"Dunno," replied Art's friend. "Put out a feeler t'other day. Let the ol' top know if he was short on cash I'd be glad to give him a lift. Didn't take to it kindly. Something like shaking a red rag before an agry bull. I gathered it was none of my business." The friend made the expressive gesture of washing his hands

"Oh, well, you know when a fellow gets married these days," said the gossip mysteriously.

"Blah, you old pollycarp! I think Art is a confirmed old mossback. Suspect his wife is giving him the dose he is needin'. Bitter, most likely, but good for him."

So the days passed. Arthur and his wife met at the table, he scowling and grumpy, she smiling and complacent. She carried on a light frivolous conversation to all appearances superbly happy. He ate in sullen silence, stubbornly keeping raw the wound which had been inflicted upon his pride.

The household machinery went jerkily on under Maria's lackadaisical methods. If Inez noticed the jars she gave no evidence of it. They irritated Arthur. He longed for those days back which had followed his marriage when Inez's chief joy was the making of the house he had bought, into a home. He glanced darkly about. How quickly it had changed—the home back into a house. He wondered how Inez could seem so sublimely unconscious of the change when before she had been the homiest of home women

One morning hastening with his dressing he could find nowhere those elusive cuff buttons. Going to the door of her room he bawled, "Inez, where are my cuff buttons?"

"Why should I know, dear?"

"What did I marry you for?" the man blurted forth.

"I suppose," calmly replied his wife," your idea was that I should be your slave. Slaves receive no pay usually."

The man groaned, gritted his teeth, asked:

"What is your idea of a woman's work in this world?" he demanded.

"Raising children," she answered simply. She could not, else she did not, try to hide the soft light that shone upon her face and the wistful longing in her eyes. The man gazed at her, somewhat dumbfounded. Suddenly he saw himself as a cad.

"See here, girlie," he said softly, "I'll compromise. We can't go on this way. I can't pay you as much as Hanford & White, but I'll set aside a sum each month for you if——"

A pair of soft arms strangled the rest of the sentence.

"You are seeing the light," she laughed softly. "It isn't so much money I want. It is that I just can't bear to go thru

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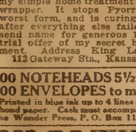

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life moneyless, like—like some women do."

Arthur Crasen kissed his wife and the gloom slipped away like the shadow of a drifting cloud.

"Am I a model husband?" he asked.

She looked at him, a thousand imps of mischief dancing in her eyes.

"Where I was working a model was a small imitation of the real thing." The man gasped, gulped, laughed.

"You're an old dear," she assured him.

THE END.

* * *

Once Is Enough

THE little tearoom at the Sign of the Pewter Bowl was prospering. There was no doubt about that. Members of the profession liked it because it was "homey" and near their theaters; nondescript people liked it because here they would see for nothing people that one pays four dollars to glimpse across the footlights. And thru the hominess, and prosperity, moved the energetic figure of Betty Best.

That Betty was really the cause for the Pewter Bowl's new-found prosperity none knew better than Charlie Bridges, its proprietor. His favorite post was behind the wire cage of the cashier's desk, where he would beam genially and admire the high color that flushed Betty's cheeks as she flew about her duties. For Betty was good to look at.

In time Charlie, good business man that he was, sought to make the arrangement permanent. There were other arguments besides business for Charlie's wanting to marry Betty, of course, but we won't dwell on them here, since she had no intention of accepting him at all. Betty had very definite ideas about woman's place, and it was not, alas, for Charlie, either in the home or behind the scenes in her husband's restaurant. She planned in time, to have a career; and Charlie was given the small consolation of knowing that she was serving as a waitress only as a preliminary to great things.

Just what definite form these high ambitions of Betty's took she had never confided to Charlie. But anybody with half an eye could see that she was extremely solicitous about the needs of the stage folk that came to the Pewter Bowl and might have concluded that Betty was stage-struck. Which was true.

For her romance of the day began shortly after noon, when the profession begins to bestir itself abroad. Chorus ladies, frankly made up for a matinee, would drift in then for a combination breakfast-lunch, and Betty would serve it much as a Greek handmaiden might have offered sacrifice to the gods. There was theater gossip tossed from table to table, and Betty would listen breathlessly. And sometimes, in lieu of a tip, a customer might leave a complimentary ticket to a performance at his theater. And once—the thought of it still thrilled her unspeakably—once Joy Barry sneaked her behind-scenes to a corner where she could watch things unnoticed.

Joe was a "super" at the theater across from the Pewter Bowl. She was blind, pretty and, Betty privately thought, deserving of more recognition than an undiscerning public had yet accorded her She was possessed of the mercurial temperament common to the successful and unsuccessful of her profession, which, as it happened, was of vital importance to Betty, whose whole career had been altered because one day Miss Barry entered the tearoom completely out of sorts.

Stage life, it appeared, was everything that was detestable, she was thru for good; she was going to cut today's performance; she would get a good job with easy hours, waiting on tables or selling toilet articles.

Betty listened to this high treason with a heart that beat in painful excitement. She knew Joy Barry's part—she had to skip lightly across the stage with a group of village girls in the third act, and to decorate the background, smiling naturally, in the fourth act. Easy enough! Would she—would Joy, dear Joy, let her take her place just this once. Joy smiled cynically at Betty's excitement, but she agreed willingly enough. She would write a note to one of the girls in the act, so that there wouldn't be any trouble about it. Nobody else would notice her.

And so it happened that Betty Best found herself, for one night at least, a part of the life she had so long dreamed about. In the pigtails and abbreviated skirts of a village girl she waited in the wings for the cue. Her throat was distressingly dry and her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth. She was terrified, for no reason at all. Her knees trembled and she smiled a sickly response to the girl who tried to cheer her up. And thru it all she was surprised. So this was what it was like'

All too quickly came the cue for the entrance. The other village girls skipped by her and left her behind in her hesitation. She copied their motion as best she could and forced herself upon the stage. The audience, that vast sea of faces out there, rose and receded dizzily before her. She swung her arms stiffly beside her and hurried as fast as she could to the haven of the wings.

The other girls were sympathetic, Everybody felt that way—why, some people never got over it, as one girl assured her. Never got over it! In that moment Betty's career was sealed, and Charlie might take heart.

The fourth act came all to soon. In tights and ballet skirt that made her feel more miserably self-conscious then ever, Betty waited in the wings as tho for her doom. Her cue—it was time to go on again! She set her stiff lips into a determined smile and walked upon the stage. The same dizziness, the same freezing of all her powers! She managed to get into her place in the background and then fainted dead away. Joy Barry had played the part for months without being able to attract notice. Not so Betty Best!

We don't have to say much about the furore it caused, because Betty wasn't there to hear it, either. She slipped into the Pewter Bowl a little shamefacedly, her natural color putting her grease paint to shame.

Charlie greeted her reproachfully. "I say, why didn't you say you wanted to go on the stage?" he demanded. "I could have pulled some strings to get you a real part."

Betty shook her head at him, her expression one of benevolent wisdom; but a trace of mischief showed thru her smile.

"I don't believe in careers for women," she announced. "Woman's place is in the home."

The Peasant and the Gourds.

THE Peasant went to the Sage and said:

"O, wise man I want some advice!"

"And I will gladly give it to you," was the reply. "Go ahead and state your case."

"It's like this, O wise man. I'm raising some Gourds to see if I can get the prize at the County Fair."

"Your object is a very worthy one," said the Sage.

"My neighbor is also raising Gourds," continued the Peasant. "There is, of course, a certain ill feeling between us. I don't want him to win the prize and he doesn't want me to win it, but still we do not want to come to an open rupture."

"If his Gourds were out of the way, you would be sure to win the prize?" queried the Sage.

"Surely," replied the Peasant.

"Then I will tell you what to do. When you go home after dark tonight, you climb in his garden and be blindfolded so that you cannot see. You whirl around about fifty times and then begin smashing everything you come to with a stout club. After that, I don't think you will have any trouble."

The Peasant went away with grateful heart, but he returned next morning to say:

"O, Sage, your wisdom has ruined me! I did as you told me to and a pounded the necks off of all my gourds!"

Moral: He who wishes to do his neighbor a wrong will often get the worst of it.

* * *

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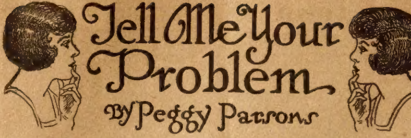


Tell Me Your Problem

By Peggy Parsons

**A word of counsel when the heart is in it
May clear a year of trouble in a minute.**

Dear Miss Parsons: I am engaged to be married in about a year and my father is very much opposed to my intended husband. There is a great deal of difference in our ages; I am 27, and the man is 40. Before I accepted my engagement ring my father gave his consent, altho I considered myself old enough to choose my husband. I cannot quite understand why my father should act as he does unless it is because I keep house for him and do everything for him that my mother used to do. I have a younger sister who will be at home with him when I am gone, but she is a different type. She cares nothing for housework and doesn't give my father much attention. Don't you think my father is using this objection to ages merely as an excuse? I love this man dearly and have for the past five years. UNHAPPY.

Perhaps you are right when you say that your father is using this excuse for your not getting married. If he is, this is a very selfish way for him to look at the matter. You have been good to him and have taken care of the home after your mother's death and he no doubt feels that he cannot give you up. Show him that you can still be good to him and do little things to make him comfortable even tho you do marry. Talk to your younger sister and show her how to do little things that help so much with the housework. I am sure that she will be willing to help if you go about it in the right way. Let her see that you have been good to them both and that she should help you a bit. If you love this man dearly I do not believe that difference in your ages will cause you any unhappiness, particularly since you have been acquainted for so long a time.

My Dear Miss Parsons: I am a widow of 30 and have two small children. My husband has been dead for two years and I have had quite a struggle to keep from touching our small savings, which I tried to keep together to go toward my children's educations. I am now going with a man whom I have known since I was a child and he has proposed marriage to me. I would like to accept, as I feel I am still young and I want a home for my children, too. My parents think that I should wait longer. Do you think I should? LONELY.

You were left a widow at a young age, and I know that if it weren't for your two dear babies you would be very lonely. The question of how long a widow should wait before being married the second time, is purely a personal one, and while some people might believe a year and a half but a short time, others do not wait so long a time, so it is hard for me to express my personal opinion. If you love this man dearly and you know that he will be good to your children, providing for you and them as if they were his own, I cannot blame you for wanting a companion. But be sure of all these things before you consider a step-father for your little ones.

My Dear Peggy: Is bobbed hair still worn? So many of my friends have let their hair grow out, but mine is still short and will be as long as the other girls bob their hair too. If I write you a personal letter will you answer it thru the mail? BOBBY.

Yes indeed, bobbed hair is still worn and more than ever. If you will send me a self-addressed, stamped envelope, I will be glad to answer you a personal letter thru the mail.

My Dear Miss Parsons: I have been corresponding with a young boy 16 years old for the past year. I am but 14 and my mother says that I am too young to write to this boy. He hasn't answered my last two letters and I am so lonely without his letters. Should I write again? GWENNIE.

No, Gwennie, if I were you I would forget about even having known this boy if he doesn't answer the two letters you have written. Your mother is right in saying that you are young to be carrying on such a correspondence. Oftentimes boys and girls will write little messages of love in their letters which afterwards sound very foolish to them, particularly after they become older. You have given him a fair chance to answer, and if he doesn't write very soon I should imagine that he didn't wish to carry on the correspondence further.

My Dear Miss Parsons: I have known a young boy of 18 for quite a while and altho he has never told me whether or not he loves me, he has hinted marriage to me. I am 15 and my mother thinks that I am too young to even think of such a thing. Should I accept if he does propose, or should I wait a while? NEARLY SIXTEEN.

Should this young man propose marriage to you, ask him to wait a while. A boy of that age seldom earns enough money to care for himself and wife. You are much too young to undertake such a serious thing as married life. Go out with your friends and forget about marriage for several years. Obey your mother and do as she wishes in this matter.

My Dear Miss Peggy: How can I get my chum to stop flirting with boys? She seems to think a great deal of me and I believe she would do anything in the world for me. Would she become angry if I asked her to stop, or do you think that she would appreciate it? PAT.

If your chum thinks so much of you, she will not become angry if you ask her not to flirt with the boys. You might tell her that you will discontinue going about with her if she keeps up these actions. If she is the friend she pretends to be, she will thank you for trying to change this habit. You must not "preach" in talking to her, but let her know that you are doing it for her own good, as well as your own.

Dear Miss Peggy: I am young and foolish I guess, but want your advice before I become more foolish. I am just 17 and am in deep love with a girl 15. I adore her and she only laughs when I tell her this. I have a car and it seems as tho she avoids me unless I have it with me. I think perhaps she cares more for the car than she does for me. What do you think? My heart nearly breaks when I think of the way she treats me. CAL.

It does appear as tho this young girl were quite fond of your car if she does not go out with you when you are without it. There are some girls who would rather go in an automobile with any one than in a street car or walk with a fine young man. Why don't you try going with other girls and show her that you are not worrying about whether she goes with you or not. Do not do this merely to spite her, but continue to be a good friend to her. Appear a little indifferent and she will notice it I am sure.

* * *

To Introduce Radio Movies.

THE first radio world's fair to be held in Madison Square Garden and the 69th Regiment Armory, New York City, Sept. 22 to 28, is attracting the serious attention of the radio geniuses of the world and scores of them are preparing to introduce their latest inventions at the coming exposition.

Among the noteworthy American discoveries to be shown will be at least three different instruments designed for the purpose of broadcasting photographs in motion. Europe also will be represented in this department. Half a dozen recognized wireless engineers are now busily engaged trying to perfect systems for radioing pictures and it is hoped that motion pictures may be broadcast on the opening night of the exposition.

Sixty nationally known manufacturers of the United States will have exhibits at the fair and England, France, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland and Austria will have proper representation in the foreign section. Exhibition booths will fill both the Garden and the armory.

A number of the radio trade organizations are planning to hold their 1924 conventions in New York during the fair and arrangements are now being made to conduct their business meetings in the lecture halls and demonstration auditoriums of the two buildings from 9 to 12 o'clock each morning.

Fully a thousand jobbers and dealers, native and foreign, will attend the show and two hours a day will be set aside for the transaction of business between these wholesale buyers and the exhibitors.

* * *

Distant Islands Indicate Our Weather.

THE islands of the seas are the outposts of American weather. At the recent meeting of the American Meteorological Society in Wahsington, H. W. Clough told of the relations which have been observed between the weather of such distant points as Midway Island in the Pacific, Bermuda, the Azores, Alaska, and the Mississippi Valley.

If the barometer is high at Midway Island, nearly three thousand miles west-southwest of San Francisco, the temperature is usually above normal in St. Louis and neighboring parts of the Mississippi Valley. This is particularly true in winter. On the other hand, if the barometer is high at the Azores in spring the weather is pretty sure to be warm at St. Louis, while similar barometric conditions in autumn mean cool weather in the Mississippi Valley.

High barometer in Alaska is usually

HELPED HER IN EVERY WAY

So Writes Mrs. Trombley of Sharon, Vt., Concerning Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound

Sharon, Vermont. — "I was weak and run-down, had a tired feeling and bearing-down pains. I saw an advertisement in the newspaper about Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and began taking it. It has stopped these bearing-down pains and other bad feelings, and has helped me in every way. I have so much faith in the Vegetable Compound that I keep it on hand all of the time and recommend it whenever I have the opportunity."—Mrs. LEWIS TROMBLEY, Sharon, Vermont.

Glad to Help Others

"I had pains in my back and sides for many months, and my work would have to be left undone at those times. My sister told me what good Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound was doing her, so I tried it, and from the third bottle I was well and every one thought I looked better. I am glad to help others regain their health, and you may use my testimonial." — MABEL HARTMANN, 1824 Greene Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.

You must believe that a medicine that has helped other women will help you. You should try it.

WONDERFUL—SCIENTIFIC 9 IN 1

60c With Our Great Paper for One Year BIG INTRODUCTORY OFFER

Odd, Curious, Interesting

Triumph Combination Opera or Field Glass, Compass, Stereoscope, Reading Glass. Also equipped with mirror which may be used in examination of eyes, throat or larynx—may be used as microscope, burning glass, reading glass. Truly marvelous and wonderful. Lenses of strong power—field of vision, clear and large. Folds up in compact form—easily carried in pocket or purse. To introduce our monthly publication on Everyday Life into new homes, will send our paper for one year and this marvelous instrument for only 60 cents. A grand offer.

EVERYDAY LIFE, 337 W. Madison St., 9-51, Chicago

MENDING TISSUE THE WONDER OF THE AGE. No sewing or darning. Repairs clothing, silk, satin, cotton goods, ribbons, fabrics of all kinds, kid gloves, mackintoshes, umbrellas, parasols, stockings, etc. Package, postpaid, 15 cents, two packages, 25 cents. Address, PENN PUBLISHING CO., Blairsville, Pa.

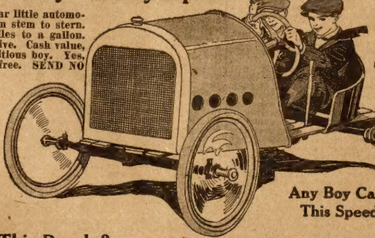
Here You Are, Boys! Famous Speedster FREE

Send Your Name Today—Hurry Up!

This famous Speedster is a regular little automobile, an honest-to-goodness car from stem to stern. Run 4 to 25 miles an hour, 60 miles to a gallon. Carries two passengers. Easy to drive. Cash value, $170.00, but it is free to some ambitious boy. Yes, FREE! Positively and absolutely free. SEND NO MONEY, just your name and address and find out how easily someone can get this wonderful Speedster free.

2½ Horse Power
Wire Wheels-Racer Model
Sturdy, Fast, Safe and Dependable

A REAL AUTOMOBILE FOR BOYS



Runs 4 to 25 Miles an Hour

Any Boy Can Drive This Speedster

Can You Solve This Puzzle?

Make out the words spelled by the numbers below and win 1,000 Speedster Votes. The letters of the alphabet are numbered. A is 1, B is 2, C is 3, and so on. Each number represents a letter. Take a minute or two and solve the puzzle. It's fun. 1,000 Speedster Votes for your correct answer to the puzzle.

7 9 22 5 14 6 18 5 5

Just think of driving a car of your very own. Fun won't be any name for it. Pride and pleasure to the limit. A glorious summer of joy ahead of you if you will only act quickly—at once—this very minute. Send your puzzle answer right now. Don't put it off. The Speedster is Free and you might as well start to win today.

JACK ROSE, Auto Man, Dept. 7, 500 N. Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

Send No Money just your puzzle answer with your name and address. This will bring you the story of the free Speedster and 1,000 Speedster votes. Everything is free of cost so hurry. Prizes awarded Aug. 30th, duplicated in case of ties.

JACK ROSE, Auto Man, Dept. 7,
500 No. Dearborn St., Chicago
I want to win the Speedster. My answer to the puzzle is:
....
Name..
Post Office.............................. State..........
R. F. D., St. or Box..

associated with low temperatures in the northern United States, Mr. Clough said. Correlation figures show this to be generally true as far south as Memphis, while at New Orleans the temperatures are little affected with a tendency to warmer weather.

* * *

YOUR GLANDS WEAR OUT!

50,000 Demonstration Treatments Sent Absolutely FREE.

If you could prevent the wear and tear on your glands caused by sickness, age, disease, etc., you would look and feel as young at 70 as at 25. Science, however, has solved the secrets of the glands and now for the first time shows you the true way to keep or regain your vigor by feeding and replenishing the most important glands!

You will throw away your "tonics" and your alcoholic "medicines" once you try this greatest of all health builders.

The Lewis Gland Treatment is absolutely original in every particular and nothing like it has ever been known in medical science.

This Combination Method is far ahead of any "Medicine"—"Tonic"—or stimulant ever used in the past. In one week's time it will accomplish more in the cases for which it is intended than a year's doctoring with almost any other form of treatment or drugs known.

First you must realize that this most modern method of administering Actual Gland Substance is so entirely new that it can not yet be purchased in drug stores. Every treatment is sent direct to the person for whom it is intended.

And in order to introduce the Lewis Method quickly, they are prepared to send 50,000 Demonstration Treatments entirely FREE without one penny of expense now or ever to those who will send for them.

We know that everyone who gives this Gland Rejuvenator a trial will be a living, walking testimony for every claim they are making and that it is destined to replace all the old fashioned drugs usually prescribed for weakness and lack of vigor.

What You May Expect This Treatment To Do For You.

The Lewis Method will positively Rebuild and Replace worn and wasted gland tissue. It will increase vitality, both physical and mental. It will renew strength, especially as to the functioning of the glands. It will increase your endurance and render you less liable to fatigue. It will improve your general health, and in most cases cause a marked improvement in your appearance. Your appetite will increase and you will surely gain in weight if you are at present in a "run-down" condition.

It is especially recommended to men for Prostatic troubles, Liver, Kidney and Bladder disorders and Rheumatism, both muscular and joint.

The instructions and suggestions that accompany the Demonstration Treatment will tell you about the Lewis Treatment in much greater detail than is possible in a general announcement.

Not a Mere "Medicine" But a Genuine Systemic Restorative.

This Gland Building Treatment is the greatest rebuilder of worn or wasted gland tissues that has ever before been prescribed.

It will act very much like a powerful force that reached down, picked you up when you were helpless and set you on your feet with the will and the power to be a man among men.

Only those who have had the privilege of testing this Method can have any real comprehension of its wonderful efficiency.

The Demonstration Treatment will prove to you beyond reasonable doubt that the Lewis Method of Gland Growth and Rejuvenation is the most wonderful treatment for the renewing of strength and vigor that has ever been conceived.

It is based entirely on the principle of Feeding Actual Gland Substance Direct to the Glands—thereby actually renewing and rejuvenating them.

This Method of giving new life to the glands is advocated and endorsed by the leading students of gland therapy throughout the world—including Dr. Arnold Lorand, who is generally conceded to be the greatest living authority on this subject.

The actual Method of Treatment used by us is the result of exhaustive experiments covering several thousand cases, during the past two years.

Send to the Lewis Laboratories, 236M Lewis Bldg., Market & Washington Sts., Chicago, Ill., for your Demonstration Treatment NOW. Don't wait until it is too late and all the free treatments are gone. If you will follow this impulse and send in your name before you let this paper get out of your hands you will be sure to receive your free treatment within a few days. Then you will see and know, and will be in the happy position of being able to judge for yourself. Be sure you mention whether the treatment is wanted for male or female. If you wish, please inclose 10 cts. for postage and packing.

All correspondence and all packages sent by them come to you in plain, sealed containers.

The Pet of the Town

PAULINE had been engaged more times than all the rest of the girls in town put together, and she kept on getting engaged so sweetly and swiftly that even the men she was engaged to wondered ecstatically how it had ever happened, and then wondered, a brief time afterwards, how it had ever unhappened. All this to say nothing of all the nice out-of-town young men and summer vacationists with whom Pauline corresponded volubly.

Pauline was the sort of girl a small boy would stop on the street to stare at and then stare at some more, with an ardent, "Gee, but you're pretty!" Eyes blue as July skies, bright silken curls bobbed like a child's, an adorable smile and eager loving hands that went with the quick come-hitherness of all the rest of her—that was Pauline. And the girls and women liked her, too, from the little girls to the young married folks and the prim lavender-capped old ladies she always smiled at and made frisky little calls on, Pauline was as popular as a Paris fashion, and seemingly as unconscious of the fact as a blue-eyed kitten.

Then along came Ez Dustin—dark, big, quiet (apparently)—a new local manager of the telegraph and telephone company, "a rising young man," the men folks said, a "humdinger," the youths called him; and the girls put on their fluffiest frocks and put an extra kink into their bobs, and hoped he'd at least ask for a walk or a dance or a call.

All but Pauline. For the first time in Pauline's engaging young life, it looked as if she was stage-struck, spellbound, call it what you will. Her merry eyes were cast down every time she met Dustin on the street; all the captivating wiles other men fell for instantly vanished apparently into oblivion. Even Pauline's curls got as demure as curls can get, and only the plainest frocks went to dances and plays and lawn parties.

"Clever miss!" sighed the young married woman who saw Pauline's faults as well as her virtues. "Contrast with the other girls is what she's working for. Can you beat it? But you don't see Ez Dustin falling for her, do you?"

It was true. It looked as if either the fame of the little philanderer's doings had reached young Dustin's canny ears and made him wary, or he just plain didn't like the popular young miss, or something else. Anyway, Pauline saw herself passed by by the newest, most stunning man in town; saw her young friends frisked off here and there one after another in rapid succession right under her saucy little nose.

One day it would be Ruth Larkin, escorted to the theater in the Dustin runabout, another day it would be Molly Roads who hiked over the Fells with him, and so on, until, to be frank, the whole town had to confess that there wasn't a girl in the place except Pauline Phelps to whom Ezra Dustin had not shown some delightful attention.

Even little pink-haired Mary Saunders had twice been taken to dances by Ezra—Mary, who had never been anywhere much. But Pauline sat on the sidelines, or trotted about, very seldom, tho—and primly, with the nice boys she had been engaged to, somehow it seemed she had lost all the zest of the great game she knew so amazingly well.

Then with the speed of a prairie express, the news spread thru the town that Ezra was engaged to marry Ruth. Ruth herself did not deny the report, and certain it was that on the Saturday night dance program she left the handsome stranger have fully three-fourths of the dances. The town was thrilled. This particular thrill lasted till the Center lawn party, when Ezra danced attention to Molly like a medieval gallant, and the next day Molly appeared with a diamond, set in silvery stuff, presumably platinum. This thrill lasted until Molly stopped wearing the ring, and little Mary began to go driving with Ezra every evening and to get pinker and prettier, and incidentally, to be noticed by every young beau of the town.

Meantime, Ezra suceeded in doing good work for the Tel. &. Tel. offices, and six months after the beginning of his campaign as company manager and knight of the town, he was promoted to the position of company manager in the next city. The question was, would he accept and, if he did, whom would he take with him?

Ezra accepted, and for several weeks before leaving town, as far as onlookers could discern, attended strictly to telegraph and telephone business. During those weeks Ruth announced her engagement to the local dentist, Molly told quite frankly that the ring had been a joke, and had cost exactly ten cents, and little Mary and Pauline held their peace. Moreover, they held it together. They got more and more intimate, walked together, drove together, shopped and embroidered together, and what they talked together for some time goodness only knew.

When it all did come out, talk about thrills! It was one of the most thrilling thrills that had ever struck the place, because nobody had suspected it. The whole story was revealed at the farewell party the Tel. & Tel. folks gave in honor of their enterprising young manager.

During the evening Ezra punctiliously danced with every girl in the hall, cutting in gallantly, and including even Pauline and Mary in his attentions. At the close of the evening the Tel. & Tel. Company presented Ezra with a monogramed gold pencil, and Ezra, after expressing his thanks, spoke a few words in addition.

"Friends," he said, laughing frankly, "you all know I've been acting the flirt since I've been here among you. It's natural as breathing. Always has been."

"Just like Pauline!" The town's folks nudged one another. Dustin caught the whisper.

"Exactly," he smiled. "Just like Miss Pauline Phelps, and neither of us has ever meant any harm, but from the time I met Pauline two years ago (eyes got bigger) at the shore, all during our most interesting correspondence (eyes popping wide) up to the present moment, we have both been sure that when the time came for us to go on our honeymoon together we'd be thru with flirtation and ready to settle down in something pretty close to bliss with each other."

The town gasped.

"Pauline stopped flirting before I did," grinned Ezra. "She played the demure game and got away with it, I think. We thought it would be fun to keep you all guessing. Oh, by the way, Mary Saunders is my cousin. Come here, Mary, and make your bow. Come, Pauline, don't let the man do all the talking. Come to see us, everybody. We'll try to give you a good time."

Pauline smiled demurely. She felt demure, confiding, adoring.

"I hate to leave you all," she said. "I love you so."

And at that instant all the town's liking for the pretty little flirt added to itself a whole-hearted love that forgave every former engagement, and said, "Glory be!" to the last one.

* * *

LEG SORES

The Bayles Distributing Co., 1856 Grand Ave., Kansas City, Mo., will mail Free Sample of ANTI-FLAMMA, a Soothing Anti-septic Poultice that draws out the poisons, stops the itching around sores and Heals While You Work. Write today describing case.—Adv.

Something to Make Thinkers Think.

Hidden Flowers.

236—1. A quality of sugar, and a man's name?

2. A color, and a person who roams?

3. A bird, and something used in riding?

4. A part of the eye?

5. A minister?

6. An animal, and where ferry-boats come in?

7. A certain time of the day?

8. An animal, and a small gong?

9. What unmarried men wear?

10. Used on dresses, and a mythological creature?

Acrostic Sentence.

237—Borne; the reverse of under; the whole of; a great city. Primals spell a mineral to which the sentence might be applied.

Four-word Square.

238—1. A girl's name.

2. Extent of surface.

3. The home of a bird.

4. What we like three times a day.

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLES

233—Beheadings and Curtailings.

1. D-apple-d. 2. P-ash-a. 3. D-air-y. 4. L-edge-r. 5. T-rut-h. 6. V-ice-s. 7. S-pite. 8. S-love-n.

234—Charade.

Show-case.

235—Two Easy Word Squares.

L A N E   U R A L
A R I D   R O M E
N I N E   A M E N
E D E N   L E N A

It is not desired that readers send in the answers to the puzzle. They are offered simply as brain teasers, and the correct answers will be printed the following week.

* * *

Foods That Go Together.

BEEF loaf, brown gravy; mashed potoes, Swiss chard, tomato jelly, salad and apple dumplings.

Pork chops, broiled, fried apples; candied sweet potatoes or mashed potatoes, lettuce and tomato salad and cream puffs with chocolate sauce.

Veal breast, stuffed, brown sauce; mashed potatoes, peas, asparagus on toast, lettuce salad with French dressing and Bavarian cream.

Smothered chicken, cream sauce; Parisienne potatoes, cauliflower, corn salad with French dressing and tapioca cream.

Virginia ham, baked, cider sauce; potato croquettes, browned sweet potatoes, hot slaw, watercress salad and mince pie.

Loin of mutton, roast, brown sauce; boiled rice, stewed tomatoes; lima beans, lettuce salad with Russian dressing and custard souffle with foamy sauce.

Larded filet, muchroom sauce; potato croquettes, spinach, mayonnaise of cabbage and rice meringue pudding.

Fried oysters, cold slaw, mashed potatoes, stewed tomatoes, celery salad and cabinet pudding with foamy sauce.

Veal cutlets, breaded; tomato sauce; mashed potatoes, green peas on salsify cakes, lettuce salad and brown betty with hard sauce.

Leg of mutton, braised, caper sauce; mashed potatoes, creamed spinach, celery salad and charlotte russe.

Corned beef, potato balls, cabbage, romaine and radish salad and tapioca pudding.

Spanish mackerel broiled, cucumber sauce; mashed potatoes, buttered carrote, asparagus salad with vinaigrette dressing and cranberry pie.

Ham, baked, currant jelly; sweet potatoes, Southern style; spinach, vegetable salad and coffee whip.

Pork tenderloin, mint sauce; mashed potatoes, stewed tomatoes, celery and apple salad and orange shortcake.

* * *

Rouge Et Noir.

DINAH, a dusky belle, had purchased a stunning red hat and she was showing it to her friend Mandy. The latter regarded it rather dubiously. "I think it's a lovely conskeption," she remarked, "but it don't suit you."

"What's de reason it don't suit me?" demanded Dinah.

"Well, Honey, if yo' wants mah hones' opinion, Ah thinks it makes yo' look too French!"

* * *

The Phantom Mill

(Continued From Page 6.)

placed here on guard. Dawn was breaking in the east and by its faint gray noted his villainous face. It came to me that the clenched fist and straight-arm jab were accomplishments exclusively of the white race and I bounded to meet my adversary who was alone—the other thugs having gone elsewhere.

I returned the automatic to my pocket, determined to depend upon my two fists—to win or go under, kill or be killed with no other weapons. In another few moments the breed or I would be a corpse. My thoughts again reverted to Martha and I must have gone berserker . . . I motioned to her and she fled to the boat.

The breed was first to charge—but the wily devil did not know that he was up against an adversary who had but now returned from a bloody war. Yet there was strength and cunning behind the breed's grimness. In sudden frenzy he rushed me with a blow of his powerful fist full in the face and I went under but quickly scrambled up again, sky, trees, hills, everything turning from black to a dull red, then to a rose glow. For a split second my knees quivered—then I thought of Martha at the mercy of such a beast. Had she been a loose woman—a child of the gutters—loving her as I did, I would have shielded her body under a rain of missiles from a machine gun.

The brute savagery of it—the stark

Free To
Pile Sufferers

Don't Be Cut—Until You Try This New Home Cure That Anyone Can Use Without Discomfort or Loss of Time. Simply Chew up a Pleasant Tasting Tablet Occasionally and Rid Yourself of Piles.

Let Me Prove This Free.

My internal method for the treatment and permanent relief of piles is the correct one. Thousands upon thousands of grateful letters testify to this, and I want you to try this method at my expense.

No matter whether your case is of long standing or recent development, whether it is chronic or acute, whether it is occasional or permanent, you should send for this free trial treatment.

No matter where you live, no matter what your age or occupation, if you are troubled with piles, my method will relieve you promptly.

I especially want to send it to those apparently hopeless cases where all forms of ointments, salves, and other local applications have failed.

I want you to realize that my method of treating piles is the one most dependable treatment.

This liberal offer of free treatment is too important for you to neglect a single day. Write now. Send no money. Simply mail the coupon, but do this now. TODAY.

Free Pile Remedy

E. R. Page,
388 B Page Bldg., Marshall, Mich.
Please send free trial of your method to:
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....
....

insanity of that struggle—the beastly quality of the battle were unnerving. The breed's clawing talons reached my cheek and ripped the flesh. I came back with a swinging blow which caught his cheek and laid it open.

In blind fury the man charged again—I stepped back—his foot slipped on the blood-soaked turf, he whirled and fell. In that instant I was on top of him with the frenzy of a wounded tigress battling in defense of her cub. First with one fist then the other I pounded his face—hammered him into insensibility. The battle was done.

Blinded by the blood of my antagonist, I regained my footing and fled to where Martha sat in the boat with her hands covering her eyes. It was no part of my intention to await the return of the other thugs.

A winging bat scenting the blood glided before my eyes. I fancied I heard running feet in pursuit and arrived at the brink of the pool, leaped wildly for the boat and escape.

Horrors! My feet never stopped—went clear thru the bottom of the rotten old tub. I felt myself sinking—foundering among the water lilies—down thru the thick, nauseating green scum and slime, coming to rest only in the silt and oozy filth at the bottom of the mill pond.

* * * * * * *

I regained consciousness. A white-clad surgeon, watch in hand, stood at my bedside anxiously counting the beat of my pulse, with a uniformed angel of mercy hovering in the offing.

"Shucks!" I remonstrated. "You army folks haven't a spark of sentiment in your souls. Here you've gone and ruined the finest romance of a romantic life, to say nothing of the wreck you've made of The Phantom Mill of Panther Hollow."

THE END.

CLASSIFIED WANT ADS

Information-- The rate for one insertion in The Saturday Blade and one insertion in the Chicago Ledger is 35 cents a word, minimum 14 words, less 3% for cash. Each initial and group of figures is counted as a word, and the name and address are also counted. This is the minimum rate; neither more nor less is charged, irrespective of size or number of insertions. An ad may appear in both publications of the same week, or in the Blade of one week and the Ledger of the next.

W. D. BOYCE CO., Publisher, 500-514 N. Dearborn St., CHICAGO.

SALESMEN WANTED

EASY TO SELL GROCERIES, PAINTS, AUTOMOBILE oils, roofing and radio sets to consumers from samples; no capital or experience necessary; steady, profitable work. Commissions advanced. Satisfaction guaranteed; 52 years in business. Write for full particulars. Loverin & Browne Company, Wholesale Grocers, 1759 So. State St., Chicago, Illinois.

AGENTS WANTED

GREAT FREE SUIT OFFER

Tailoring Agents: Get our powerful proposition. We supply wonderful swatch line outfit showing big assortment of finest fabrics for men's made-to-measure suits all at one amazing low price. We pay biggest profits and give every active agent his own suit absolutely free. Our men make $75 to $125 a week. Write at once. State experience. Address Dept. 553, Knickerbocker Tailoring Company, 131 So. Peoria street, Chicago.

TAILORING OR RAINCOAT AGENTS—FREE —Raincoat—free. Something new, suits made-to-measure $23.50 with raincoat free. Our men already making $75.00 to $150.00 weekly on this new plan. Also big raincoat sellers $3.95. Satisfied customers everywhere. Commissions paid daily. Biggest outfit now ready. Get busy. Offer will soon be withdrawn. Elliott Bradley, Inc., 1036 W. Van Buren, Dept. A301, Chicago.

AGENTS, $20 TO $40 WEEKLY SPARE TIME appointing newsdealers, local agents to handle The Saturday Blade and Weekly Ledger. Takes only few minutes to sign one dealer, each locality, for trial order. Clean, dignified proposition, liberal payment. Write, stating territory covered to Dealer Dept. 40, W. D. Boyce Co., 500 N. Dearborn St., Chicago.

TAILORING AGENTS! $90 WEEK AND steady job taking orders for Longworth all-wool suits and overcoats $23.75, boys' suits $11.75. Special offer $45 cash and free suit for 3 days' spare-time work. Postal brings big outfit free—no waiting, no deposit. John G. Longworth & Sons, Dept. HC-6. Address—1301-11 West Congress St., Chicago.

AGENTS—WRITE FOR FREE SAMPLES. Sell Madison "Better-Made" Shirts for large manufacturer direct to wearer. No capital or experience required. Many earn $100 weekly and bonus. Madison Mills, 564 Broadway, New York.

BIG MONEY AND FAST SALES. EVERY owner buys gold initials for his auto. You charge $1.50; make $1.35. Ten orders daily easy. Write for particulars and free samples. American Monogram Co., Dept. 104, East Orange, New Jersey.

RELIABLE WELL KNOWN FIRM OFFERS pleasant, well paid employment, whole or par' time, in your home territory. If you w real income, and can give reference, w at once. Everybody's Rubber Supply Co., 321 abash Bldg., Pittsburgh, Pa.

BIG MONEY SELLING GOLD INITIALS. Quick sales. Every car owner buys. You charge $1.50—make $1.44 every sale. Your profit $20 daily. No license. No experience. Samples free. Nulife (C) Monogram Company, Hartford, Conn.

AGENTS: YOU CAN COIN MONEY SELLING our new Fabric table covers; require no laundering. Size 56x56, prepaid $1.50; 13 piece luncheon set included free. Write for sample and special offer. B. Condon, 77 Bedford St., Boston, Mass.

NEW INVENTION. CLEANS WHOLE house from cellar to attic, inside and out. All complete only $2.85. Over 100% profit. Write O. P. Morgan, Mgr., 221 Grimes St., Fairfield, Iowa.

AGENTS CLEAR $50.00 WEEKLY SELLING Opaline portraits. Expense money adanced. Credit given. Big line now ready. ples & catalog free. Consolidated Portrait Desk 1, Chicago.

MEN'S SHIRTS. EASY TO SELL. BIG DEMAND everywhere. Make $15.00 daily. Undersell stores. Complete line. Exclusive patterns. Free samples. Chicago Shirt Manufacturers, 229 W. VanBuren, Factory 200, Chicago.

AGENTS MAKE BIG MONEY SELLING NEW auto invention. Hoffenberg's sold 900 in 2 months. Profit $2700. For full particulars write Stransky Co., Dept. E-12, Pukwana, S. Dak.

BIG MONEY SELLING NEW HOUSEHOLD cleaner. Washes and dries windows. Sweeps, scrubs, mops. Complete outfit less than brooms. Over 100% profit. Harper Brush Works, 103 2nd street, Fairfield, Iowa.

EARN $10 DAILY SILVERING MIRRORS, plating, refinishing metalware, autos, chandeliers, headlights, tableware, stoves. Complete outfits furnished. Y. Decie Laboratories, 133 Broadway, New York.

MAN WANTED IN EACH TOWN TO wear and introduce C. T. A. suits in spare ne. We furnish samples and free suit to stlers. Write for our great offer. Chicago ilors Assoc., Dept. 613, Sta. C, Chicago.

MAKE $17 DAILY—FINEST EXTRACTS, food products, toilet preparations, houseold necessities. Credit; sample case free. rite for amazing offer. Perkins Products, B-7, Hastings, Nebr.

SELL HOUSEHOLD NECESSITIES. BIG line. 100% to 200% profit. Quick easy sales. Handsome sample case furnished to agents. General Products Company, Dept. 24, Newark, New Jersey.

IG MONEY AND FAST SALES EVERY owner buys gold initials for his auto. You arge $1.50, make $1.44. 10 orders daily easy. mples and information free. World Monoam Co., Dept. 2, Newark, N. J.

GENTS—MAKE A DOLLAR AN HOUR. Sell Mendets, a patent patch for instantly nding leaks in all utensils. Sample package ee. Collette Mfg. Co., Dept. 707, Amsterdam, Y.

AGENTS WANTED—(Continued)

AGENTS: NEW PATENT FIBRE HOUSE broom sells like hot cakes. Free sample offer. National Fibre Broom Co., St. Louis, Mo.

AGENTS TAKE ORDERS FOR ATTRACTIVE rugs. Sell rapidly. New plan makes sales easy. Catalog free. Maisley Payne Mfg. Co., 24 Sudbury St., Boston, Mass.

AGENTS. HOUSE DRESSES, STREET dresses, $16 to $24 dozen. Gingham, voile, crepe, sateen, 25 styles. Free catalog. Economy Sales Co., Dept. 105, Boston, Mass.

AGENTS: DOUBLE YOUR INCOME, HANDLING Norco polishing cloths. Best seller on market. Big profits. Sure repeater. Fred Horst Company, Box 183, Bellingham, Wash.

BIG MONEY SELLING FIBRE HOUSE brooms. Sure fire seller and repeater. Biggest season here. Write BVJ Co., Hillsdale, Mich., Dept. 1.

MEN AND WOMEN WHO CAN WORK PART or full time, a little mail order business at home. Write Hazen A. Horton, Desk 15, Marshall, Mich.

EVERYBODY USES EXTRACTS. SELL DUO Double Strength Extracts. Complete line household necessities. Big repeaters. Write today. Duo Co., Dept. E5, Attica, N. Y.

RUMMAGE SALES MAKE $50.00 DAILY. Offer wonderful values. We start you. "Wholesale Distributors," Dept. 40, 609 Division street, Chicago.

GENT — MAN TO OVERSEE COUNTY trade; pay starts at once; all or part time. Federal Nurseries, Rochester, N. Y.

HOSIERY AGENTS MAKE $2-$3 HOUR. Write today. Hopkins Hosiery Co., 453 Washington St., Boston.

CAN YOU SELL TO COLORED PEOPLE? Write. Stratene Co., Dept. 102, 2500 Second Ave., Birmingham, Ala.

AGENTS—OUR POCKET CIGAR LIGHTERS sell on sight; whole or spare time; large profits. Wentling Co., Palmyra, Pa.

SELL EXTRACTS AND SOAPS; NO money required. Linro Co., Dept. 134, St. Louis, Mo.

MALE HELP WANTED

EARN $110 TO $250 MONTHLY, EXPENSES paid as railway traffic inspector. Position guaranteed after completion of 3 months' home study course or money refunded. Excellent opportunities. Write for Free Booklet CM-12, Stand. Business Training Inst., Buffalo, N. Y.

$50.00 WEEKLY, START A BUSINESS of your own. Painting signs. No experience required. Our patterns do the work. Complete outfit prepaid $10.00. Acme Sales Co., Dept. L, Empire Bldg., Denver, Colo.

BE A DETECTIVE. EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY to earn big money, travel, thousands of dollars offered in rewards; established 1909; particulars free. Write C. T. Ludwig, 320 Westover Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

DETECTIVES NEEDED EVERYWHERE. Experience unnecessary. Particulars free. George Wagner, former Government detective, 1964 Broadway, New York.

BECOME AUTOMOBILE EXPERTS. EARN $35.00 week. Sample lessons free. Write immediately. Franklin Institute. Dept. P 403, Rochester, N. Y.

FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN, BAGGAGEMEN, sleeping car, train porters (colored). $140-$200. Experience unnecessary. 686 Railway Bureau, East St. Louis, Ill.

FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN, BEGINNERS $150- $250 monthly, railroads everywhere (which position?). Railway Association, Brooklyn, N. Y.

BE A DETECTIVE. $50-$100 WEEKLY, travel over world; experience unnecessary. American Detective Agency, 1080 Columbia, St. Louis.

MEN — EXPERIENCE UNNECESSARY; travel; make secret investigations; reports; salaries; expenses. Write American-Foreign Detective Agency, 126, St. Louis, Mo.

DETECTIVES NEEDED, CITIES, TOWNS. Experience unnecessary; particulars free. National Headquarters, 188 East 79th, New York.

BECOME DETECTIVE AND DO SECRET work in your town. National Detective Agency, Youngstown, Ohio.

CIVIL SERVICE SCHOOLS

$117-192 MONTH. MEN 18 UP. BECOME railway postal clerks, mail carriers. Steady work. Specimen examination questions free. Write immediately. Franklin Institute, Dept. P 24, Rochester, N. Y.

RAILWAY POSTAL CLERKS; START $133 month. Railroad pass, expenses paid; questions free. Columbus Institute, D-2, Columbus, Ohio.

ALL MEN, WOMEN, BOYS, GIRLS 17 TO 65 willing to accept Government positions, $117-$250, traveling or stationary; write Mr. Ozment, 106, St. Louis, Mo., immediately.

FOREST RANGERS, POSTAL CLERKS AND other Govt. help needed. Steady work. Particulars free. Write Mokane, A-4, Denver, Colo.

GET GOVERNMENT JOBS. BIG PAY. Write for list. Franklin Institute, Dept. P 6, Rochester, N. Y.

TOBACCO

TOBACCO. PURE, MELLOW, KENTUCKY leaf. Hand picked chewing, 6 lbs., $1.50; 75 lbs., $3.00. Smoking, 15 cts. lb. Reanos Newton, Gilbertsville, Ky.

FEMALE HELP WANTED

EXTRA $$$ DAILY AND 14 K. WHITE gold-filled wrist watch free without interfering with regular work. No selling, no investment—write today. Desk 50, G. L. M. Co., 340 W. Huron, Chicago.

EARN MONEY AT HOME DURING SPARE time painting lamp shades, pillow tops for us. No canvassing. Easy and interesting work. Experience unnecessary. Nileart Company, 2219, Ft. Wayne, Indiana.

EARN MONEY WEEKLY, SPARE TIME, home, addressing, mailing, music, circulars. Send 10c for music, information. New England Music Co., 234 Capen, Dept. P-2, Hartford, Conn.

WANTED—WOMEN TO SEW UP BLOOMERS at home, good pay, no canvassing. Send 10c coin to help pay cost of sample and instructions. Hammond Apron Co., Box 57, Hammond, Ind.

WANTED—LADIES TO EMBROIDER LINENS for us at home during their leisure moments. Write at once. "Fashion Embroideries," 1503, Lima, Ohio.

EARN EXTRA MONEY DURING SPARE time, easy, interesting work. Le Witt Company, 212 East 23rd street, New York.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

THE EMMET MERCURY VAPOR BOILER, a new invention of the General Electric Company, will use enormous quantities of quick silver. Get my interesting particulars, free. Address Box 1311, Houston, Texas.

INVEST IN QUICKSILVER MINING. NEW invention of General Electric Company will use millions of pounds. Address Box 1311, Houston, Texas.

I WILL BUY LAND IN BREWSTER County, Texas. What have you? Address Box 713, Houston, Texas.

EVERY READER OF THE LEDGER OUGHT to read these ads. Every week splendid chances to make money—to better yourself—to buy, sell or exchange goods or services, are offered free.

PROFITABLE SPARE TIME HOME BUSINESS. Valuable plans and information 25c. Emwardmor Bureau, Waukegan, Illinois.

TRICKS—GAMES

MAGIC GOODS, BOOKS, CARDS, LODESTONE tricks. Catalog free. B. I. Smith Co., Newark, Mo.

FOR SALE

ARTIFICIAL EYES $3. BOOKLET FREE. Denver Optic 566 Barclay, Denver, Colo.

MOVING PICTURE BUSINESS

LARGE PROFITS DAILY MADE IN THE business. Openings everywhere. Small capital starts you. Complete outfit sold on installments. No experience needed. Our machines are used and endorsed by Government institutions. Catalog free. Atlas Moving Picture Company, Morton Building, Chicago.

$98.00 ONLY STARTS YOU IN THIS BUSINESS. Wonderful opportunities everywhere for making fortunes. Details free. Monarch Theatre Supply Co., Dept. E, Memphis, Tenn.

EDUCATIONAL

JOIN OUR HOME STUDY CLUB AND learn how you can save from 50 to 80 per cent on new or used correspondence school courses. Particulars and application blank free. Courses bought. Students' Exchange, 47 West 42nd St., New York.

STORIES WANTED

STORIES, POEMS, PLAYS, ETC., ARE wanted for publication. Submit MSS or write Literary Bureau, 500, Hannibal, Mo.

SHORT STORIES WANTED

EARN $25 WEEKLY, SPARE TIME, WRITING for newspapers, magazines. Exp. unnec. Details free. Press Syndicate, 990 St. Louis.

PATENT ATTORNEYS

INVENTORS DESIRING TO SECURE PATENTS should write for our guide book, "How to Get Your Patent." Send model or sketch and description for our opinion on its patentable nature. Randolph Co., Dept. 174, Washington, D. C.

AUTO TIRES

BIG SALE SLIGHTLY USED GUARANTEED tires. 30x3, $2.45; 30x3½, $2.95; 32x3½, $3.45. All 4 inch tires $3.95. All 4½ and 5 inch tires $4.45. We ship C. O. D. No deposit required. Zenith Tire Co., 1800 Fremont, Chicago.

TATTOOING

TATTOOING MACHINES, ALL SUPPLIES. Largest house in America. Tattoo Supply, 526 Main, Norfolk, Va.

MEDICAL

PELLAGRA SUFFERERS CAN GET WELL. Thousands of letters from patients have been received, stating that they have regained their health. There is hope for all who write to the American Compounding Co., Box 3159, Jasper, Ala., for their booklet on "Pellagra and How to Treat It." This will be sent you free, postpaid, in plain wrapper.

CRAVING AFTER LIQUOR STOPPED, OUR home treatment, on market 15 years, has cured cases even without the patient's knowledge. Correspondence private. Free trial. Acme Medicine Co., Dept.-H, 139 N. Clark, Chicago, Ill.

FOR LADIES

PERMANENT WAVE, AND LIQUID POWDER formulas. Guaranteed. $3. M. Hughey, 1517 Glenarm, Denver, Colo.

AUTO ACCESSORIES

FORD OWNERS: DON'T BUY ANY PARTS or accessories for your car until you get our catalog. Adee Specialty Co., Matoaka, W. Va.

PRINTING

FIFTY VISITING CARDS WITH YOUR NAME neatly printed on linen finish bristol, sent prepaid for ten cents. Write name plainly. Star Print Shop, Paso Robles, California.

PERSONAL

MARRY—JOIN THE HIGH CLASS SELECT Club, many wealthy, honorable, refined members everywhere. Confidential, long established, reliable. People's Correspondence Club, Box 94, Los Angeles, Calif.

KNOW THYSELF. WONDERFUL THREE page horoscope. Your talents, character, love, friends, enemies, business. Send birth date year, your handwriting, and 10c. Gargilis, Box 2771-N, Boston, Mass.

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LONELY HEARTS, JOIN OUR CLUB, BE happy, correspondence everywhere, many wealthy; descriptions, photos free; either sex; most successful method, 23 years' experience. Standard Corr. Club, Grayslake, Ill.

ARE YOU LONELY OR UNHAPPY? CHEER up! Send for the Queen of Correspondence plans (mailed in sealed envelope), 10c or free. Address, Happy Home Magazine, 100 Presto Building, Pittsburgh, Pa.

MARRY. HUNDREDS WEALTHY. LARGEST, best, most reliable club. Quickest results; write, be convinced. Confidential, descriptions free. Mrs. Budd, Box 753, San Francisco, Calif.

HAPPY MARRIAGE; CONFIDENTIAL DESCRIPTIONS free in plain sealed envelopes; many wealthy; reliable; established 19 yrs. Bank references. Mrs. Wrubel, Box 26, Oakland, Cal.

SIXTH AND SEVENTH BOOK OF MOSES. Egyptian secrets. Black art, other rare books. Catalogue free. Star Book Co., 62B, Camden, N. J.

YOUR HOROSCOPE WITH PICTORIAL chart showing character, talents, occupation, life partner, etc. Send 10c, birthdate. St. Germain Society, Dept. 112, Sharpsburg, Pa.

SORE LEGS WILL HEAL UNDER ANTI-Flamme Poultice Plaster. Describe case and get free sample. Bayles Distributing Co., 1856 Grand Ave., Kansas City, Mo.

MARRY—FREE PHOTOGRAPHS. DIRECTORY and descriptions of wealthy members. Pay when married. New Plan Co., Dept. 21, Kansas City, Mo.

MARRY—MARRIAGE DIRECTORY WITH photos and descriptions free. Pay when married. The Exchange, Dept. 23, Kansas City, Mo.

ATTRACTIVE MIDDLE AGED WIDOW with considerable means, desires gentleman correspondent; object matrimony. J. Lacy, Medina, N. Y.

GET MARRIED — BEST MATRIMONIAL paper published. Correspondent, Toledo, Ohio.

BRITISH GIRLS DESIRE AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS. Phoposition 10c. Clare, 16, Cambridge street, London, S. W., England.

GET A SWEETHEART. EXCHANGE LETTERS. Write me enclosing stamp. V. Ray, Dennison, Ohio.

MARRY! FREE DIRECTORY WITH DESCRIPTIONS and photos. Bonafide Co., Dept. 5, Kansas City, Mo.

MARRY — BIG, NEW DIRECTORY WITH photos and descriptions free. National Agency, Dept. 3, Kansas City, Mo.

MARRY WEALTH, HAPPINESS. LADIES write; enclose stamp. D. Dawn, South Euclid, Ohio.

CHARMING GIRL, WORTH $30,000, DESIRES marriage. Mary, Box 242, Garden City, Kansas.

LUCKY COIN 10c. SECRETS. OCCULT books. Genuine lodestones $1. Catalog 5c. Box 55, Station I, New York.

WIFE GUARANTEED EVERY MAN JOINING my club. Bertna Floyd, Dept. 22, Western Springs, Illinois. Particulars for stamp.

MARRY RICH — WORLD'S BEST CLUB. Quick results. Guaranteed. R. Hyde (86), San Francisco, Cal.

SWEETHEARTS CORRESPONDENCE CLUB. Stamped envelope for sealed proposal. L. Sproul, Station H, Cleveland, Ohio.

WEALTHY COLORADO AGRICULTURIST, bachelor, will marry. D-Box 866, League, Denver, Colo.

"GYPSY LOVE" POWDER PERFUME. SEND dollar for package and "How to Win Love." May Cochran, Long Beach, Calif.

WRINKLES CURED! NO PLASTERS OR creams. Sample free, postpaid. L. Bradley, Box 1035, New Orleans, La.

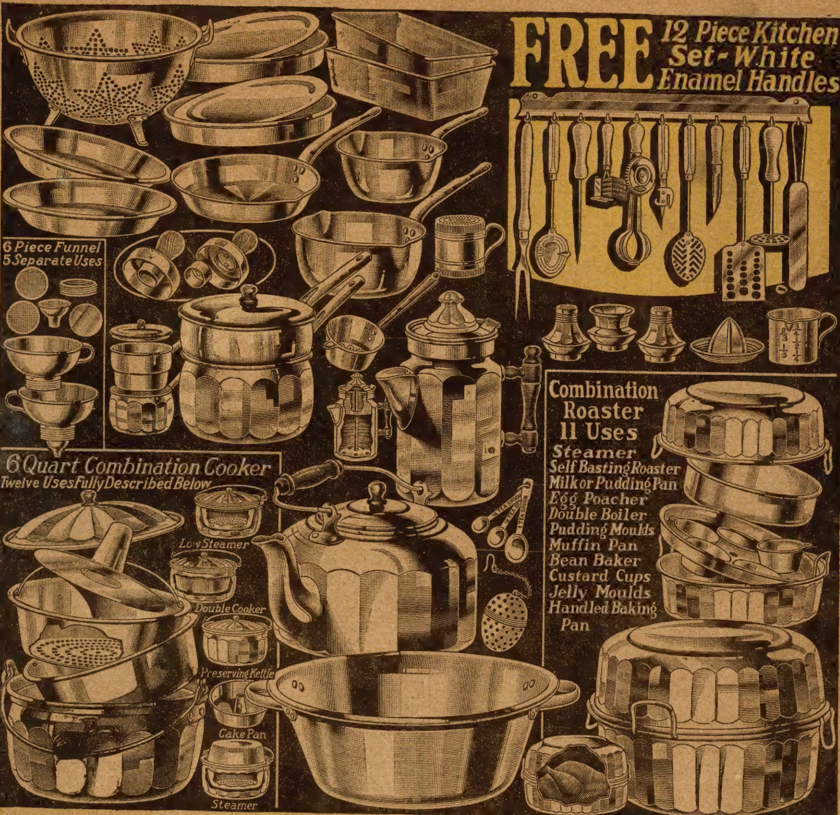
CATHOLICS, WISHING TO MARRY, BOOKLET free. Address Home Club, L-Box 23, Grand Rapids, Mich.

YOUNG ATTRACTIVE LADY WORTH $30,000, lonely, will marry. Eva, B-1022, Wichita, Kansas.

$30,000 GOES WITH LADY TO HONEST husband. Club, Box 39, Oxford, Fla.

PRETTY GIRLIE, 19, WORTH $50,000, WILL marry. League, Box 55, Oxford, Fla.

WANT A REAL PAL? WRITE NANCY BELL, Box 773, Philadelphia, Penn. (Stamp.)



53 Pieces High Grade Aluminum

ON 30 DAYS' FREE TRIAL

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$1 With Order

Former Price $25 Now Only $16.95 Easy Monthly Payments

Here is one of the finest offers I have ever been able to make. Here is your chance to try for a whole month, right in your own kitchen, a Handsome, Useful and High-Grade Panelled Aluminum Set at my invitation and at my risk. Send the coupon and first payment today. The complete set will be sent you immediately. Begin at once to use it as your own. Learn the big difference between percolator coffee and coffee-pot coffee. Know the many uses of the Big Combination Roaster and the 6 quart Combination Cooker (see picture above). See for yourself how they save fuel, time and labor. Experience by daily use, the pleasure in handling and the profit in using all the pieces. Enjoy the bright clean, spic-and-span appearance the 53 pieces give your kitchen. The 10 quart dish pan is also a large, very desirable piece.

This Colonial Panelled Aluminum Set must be its own salesman; you don't buy from pictures when you deal with Spear. You must be entirely satisfied with its High Quality, its Low Price, and its Easy Terms. You must be delighted with its Shining Beauty and its High Efficiency. If your satisfaction is not thorough from every viewpoint, no matter how much you have used the set during the 30 days, you can return it. Your first payment and all transportation costs will be refunded. The Trial will not cost you a penny. Important! Every piece in this set is genuine high-grade pure aluminum, mirror-like in finish. All pieces are seamless, sanitary and easy to clean. Will not flake, crack, chip, or peel. **EACH AND EVERY PIECE IS GUARANTEED TO GIVE ABSOLUTE SATISFACTION.** Heats rapidly and evenly, and so saves fuel. Heavier and better than ordinary grades. These pieces are made of heavy, extra hard high-grade Aluminum and will give years of Hard, Honest, Faithful Service. All the articles are of a large serviceable size. Every article is of the kind that you will need and use often. This set must not be confused with ordinary sets that include many useless thin pieces. You must judge this set by its big value, rather than its little price. And this you can do during your 30 Days' Free Trial. **Order No. SA2520. Price $16.95. Terms: $1.00 with order, balance $1.50 monthly.** Will be shipped by express unless otherwise requested.

12-PIECE KITCHEN SET FREE!

If you will be prompt; if you will send your order quickly I will send you Absolutely Free, a Very Useful and Attractive 12-piece Kitchen Set with sanitary white enameled handles.

THE SET CONSISTS OF

- 14½-inch meat fork
- Measuring and mixing spoon
- Ice pick
- Pot and pan scraper and brush
- Can and bottle opener
- Egg and mayonnaise beater
- Mixing and draining spoon
- Apple corer, paring knife and fish scaler
- Pan cake turner
- Potato and vegetable masher
- Spatula and cake lifter
- Rust proof nickel plated wall rack
- All pieces hang on wall rack within easy reach

The 53 Fine Pieces

9-piece Colonial panelled roaster of large capacity, 11 uses – diameter 10½ inches, 6 inches high. Inside milk pan 2½ in. high, 8¼ inches in diameter.
1 Colonial panelled percolator with inset, capacity 7 cups (2 pcs.)
1 Colonial panelled six qt. combination cooker. 12 uses. Pudding pan, strainer or colander, casserole or bake dish, convex kettle, preserving kettle, self-basting roaster, combination cooker, corn popper or corn flake toaster, cereal cooker or double boiler, 1 steamer set, cake tube, and panelled kettle cover (5 pcs.)
1 Colonial panelled six qt. tea kettle and cover; 2 pieces.
1 Dish pan, capacity 10 qts; diam. 15½ in.
1 Colander, diameter 9½ in.
1 Colonial panelled double boiler; inside piece, capacity 1½ qts. Outside piece, capacity 2 qts. and cover; 3 pieces.
1 1-qt. lipped saucepan.
1 2-qt. lipped saucepan.
2 Bread pans, 9½ x 5½ in.
2 Colonial panelled salt and pepper shakers.
1 Colonial panelled tooth-pick holder.
2 Measuring spoons.
1 Measuring cup.
1 Sugar shaker.
1 Combination funnel, 5 separate uses; 6 pieces.
1 Combination biscuit and doughnut cutter (2 pcs.)
1 Coffee or tea strainer.
2 Jelly or layer cake pans with loose bottoms, diam. 10 in., 4 pieces.
2 Pie plates, diam. 10 in.
1 Fry Pan. 1 Tea ball.
1 Lemon juice extractor

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Spear
of Pittsburgh

This Bargain Book Free
Send for it

SLASHED PRICE BARGAINS!

Bargains that will astound You * * * Slashed Prices that Challenge All Competition * * * THE LONGEST TIME TO PAY * * * These are just a few of the many advantages of dealing with Spear. Send for my Big Free Catalog today. Learn about my **MONEY BACK BOND**, the Fairest, Squarest guarantee in the world—the guarantee that puts all the risk on me, and none on you. See the Thousands of Illustrations that will aid you in selecting your new Furniture and Furnishings. Remember I sell everything for the Home on the Easiest terms. Before you buy anything anywhere Consult my Free Book. Write for it today. It shows Thousands of Slashed Price Bargains in **Furniture, Bedding, Springs, Mattresses, Bed Spreads; Rugs, Carpets, Linoleum, Lace Curtains, Portieres, Dishes, Stoves, Ranges, Refrigerators, Lamps, Glassware, Clocks, Aluminum Ware, Baby Carriages, Enamel Cooking Sets, Washing Machines, Sewing Machines, Table Linen, Silverware, Cameras, Talking Machines, Children's Automobiles, Wagons, etc., Bicycles, Guns, etc.**

Nathaniel Spear
President

Spear & Co. Dept. C-2 Pittsburgh, Pa.

Home Furnishers for the People of America

SPEAR & CO., Dept. C-2, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Send me at once the 53-piece Panelled Aluminum Set and Free 12 Piece Kitchen Set as described above. Enclosed is $1.00 first payment. It is understood that if at the end of 30 days' trial I decide to keep it, I will send you $1.50 monthly. Order No. SA2520. Price $16.95. Title remains with you until paid in full. Send me your Big Free Catalog also.

Name.. Occupation..................

R. F. D., Box No. or Street & No...

Post Office.................................State..................
(If your shipping point is different from your post office fill in line below.)

Send shipment to ....
FREE CATALOG { If you want the Free Catalog Only, Send No Money, put an X here ☐ and write your name and address plainly on the above lines.